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Meditations of a Parish Priest

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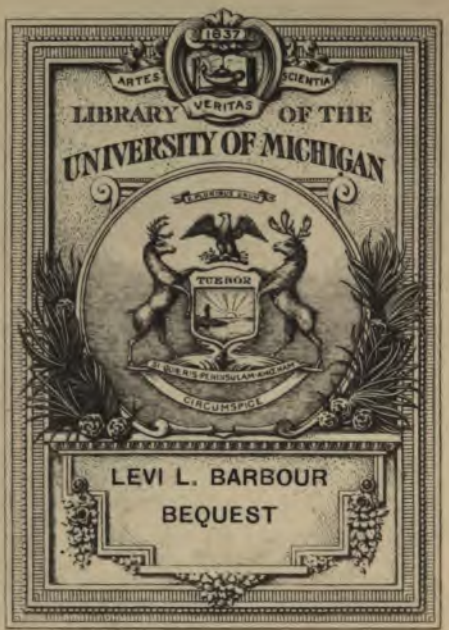

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THOUGHTS.

MEDITATIONS OF A PARISH PRIEST.

THOUGHTS.

BY

JOSEPH ROUX.

INTRODUCTION BY PAUL MARIÉTON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRD FRENCH EDITION BY

ISABEL F. HAPGOOD.

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INTRODUCTION.

SEVERAL years ago, when I began my félibrian studies, I observed in the *Review of the Romance Languages*, two or three little *chansons de geste* (heroic songs), by a Limousin author, who was unknown to me, the Abbé Joseph Roux. I wrote to him; a correspondence sprang up between us, and the pleasure which I soon enjoyed in my intercourse with my new friend suggested to me the idea of allowing others to participate in it.

I had, in fact, discovered in the Abbé Roux, not only the Limousin poet whom I had set out to seek, but a remarkable French writer and almost a polygraph.

I shall never forget the feeling of surprise which I experienced when I came to examine for the first time the voluminous pile of his manuscripts, when it was, with me, only a question of a note upon a poet.

In the presence of these large pages, all covered with an astonishing lapidary writing which would delight graphologists, but which were

very unequal, to tell the truth, and in all tones, I perceived the possibility of many volumes of *Complete Works* for this man of fifty who had as yet published nothing.

Great was destined to be the surprise of his fellow-countrymen, and he himself could not have foreseen the whole extent of his good fortune, for the learned men of Germany, after outbidding each other in advance, began to edit his philological works for him. . . . It is a profound truth that no one is a prophet in his own country. Superior minds are like stars which may disappear from our horizon without a single ray of their light having reached us.

My first care was to carry out my project of a biography, the *Limousin Félibre*[1] (March, 1883), which was destined, in fact, to assign him to a high position in the Provençal Revival a few months later. This circumstance, and the publication of a portion of his French studies which I effected in the *Revue Lyonnaise* and the *Revue du monde latin*, have made the name of the Abbé Roux widely known among the lettered men of the South. It is upon this score that I have permitted myself to write this introduction to his work, in the form of a familiar conversation.

[1] The *Félibres* compose a society for the revival and production of Provençal literature. Frédéric Mistral is the chief ornament of the society.

I.

Born at Tulle, in 1834, of a humble and numerous family, of which he was the last child, Joseph Roux was early destined to the priesthood. Thus his youth retains from the toilsome mediocrity of his first surroundings only the worship of legends, and of his natal manner of speech. This worship awakes but tardily in him, when he shows himself a true poet, in his native tongue, in Limousin. Up to that time, that is to say, towards his fortieth year, the influence of his classical education wholly engrosses him. He imitates too easily, prefers the grandiose to the profound, and if he does not watch himself, grows solemn without cause, and *apropos* of everything.

The first essays of the young poet, when he had but just quitted the seminary of Brive, were noticed by his bishop, Monsigneur Bertaud. That illustrious theologian, perceiving in him possibly a future light of the Church, left him the choice of his own position. The Abbé Roux selected teaching; but an excess of work caused him to abandon it, . . . in order to pursue his studies. He obtained the vicarship of a village which was doubly poetical through its site and its memories, — Varetz, the cradle of the Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson, — and there

he continued his essays in versification and in prose. I shall not repeat here the judgment which I have elsewhere pronounced upon the French poems of the Abbé Roux. I regard them as scales rather than as music. Nevertheless, they contain real pith, as do also his first literary articles, and some of his *maximes* of 1866.

Monsigneur Bertaud distinguished him in his great mind; certain of his familiar conversations with the young vicar of Varetz are recalled at the episcopal palace in Tulle: "Go, my child; I know you well; you are like men of genius, you have great faults and great qualities. . . ." In all his French works published before the *Thoughts*, these faults predominate in a singular degree. The replies of the Abbé Roux, who with difficulty controlled the sallies of his powerful wit, are also remembered. . . . But it was a good epoch, those first years of country life! Gradually the solitude became oppressive to the young writer. He exchanged Varetz for the benefice of Saint-Silvain, a little parish near Tulle, where twelve years of melancholy isolation awaited him.

If great thoughts come from the heart, the most comforting proceed from the mind. The Abbé Roux had been fortified against this necessity of a village priest, by a solid educa-

tion. It can be readily understood what a resource his memory was to him. His years of study had been well employed in the libraries. He invariably passed his days of vacation there, amassing, at the happy age when impressions become fixed, all the treasure which he was to cause to fructify in the future.

At Saint-Silvain, where he wrote more French poems, the Abbé Roux composed his first *Thoughts*, and also the first fragments of his *Chanson limousine*, a series of historical frescoes, a sort of Limousin Legend of the Ages. Finally, in 1876, he was called to the benefice of Saint-Hilaire le Peyrou, a large market town of Corrèze, far removed from all centres, where he still is.

Thus, for twenty-five years since his departure from Brive, this noble mind has been preparing in darkness and silence a work, the reward for which he cannot long fail to reap. Two circumstances only, two dates of capital interest in the history of his humble life, have tempered the melancholy of this renunciation by their real utility: a tutorship which he exercised for six months, in 1870, in an ancient family in Normandy, which relaxed the oppression of his solitude, and permitted him to catch a glimpse of Paris, and precipitated him still more deeply into his literary projects; next,

his almost providential affiliation with the work of the *Félibres*, on the occasion of the centenary of Petrarch, in 1874, which we will not repeat here.

If this last circumstance was certainly a boon to the Abbé Roux, the former can hardly be regarded in that light. He lost at the Chartres railway station on the occasion of his abrupt return, in 1870, six note-books of his *Thoughts*, — his entire property, — which he has only replaced in part. The half of his life was in them. He set himself courageously at the task, but I cannot affirm that the new, more intimate, and more subjective work is as valuable in point of poetry and freshness of impressions as the first, which has forever disappeared.

Such as it is to-day, such as it will appear consecutively, the Abbé Roux's work will comprise four distinct volumes: the *Thoughts*, the *Chanson lemouzina* (twenty-four short epic poems), his *Studies* (country and literature), and his *Poems*, a Franco-Limousin collection. In this introduction, I shall consider only the *Thoughts* and the *Studies*,[1] more especially the *Thoughts*.

[1] Many fragments which figured in the first edition, the *Portraits of Peasants*, have been suppressed in the present one for the benefit of the special volume of *Studies*, and replaced by freshly written *Thoughts*.

When the Abbé Roux, on intrusting me with the tolerably bulky and as yet unexplored manuscript of this book, was willing to defer to my judgment in the selections to be made from it, these *Thoughts* formed, under the denomination of *Maxims, Studies, and Pictures,* the often undigested collection of all the author's reflections, coined in the special money of our great moralists. My eliminations were numerous. I have been reproached, however, — although the unanimous success which welcomed the partial publication which I have made of them has been acknowledged, — with having retained certain portions; but is it not more interesting to have a strong literary temperament to study, with all its faults and its beauties, and to afford a deep insight into the soul? . . .

The first *Thoughts* were written with the view of a more or less immediate publication. It was only on perceiving that this was slow in coming that the author gave full course to the unreserved confidence of his subjectiveness. His finest pages are the echo of this. As in the case of all those whose minds have been awakened by a classical education, the least carefully prepared of their writings will be the most durable. Compare Voltaire's little verses and his *Correspondence.* To this there is no exception, except for those who have been gradually de-

livered from the constraint of formulas by a whole life of independence or adventure. It will be understood that the most piquant bits in the volume — like the two biblical strophes, which Lamennais might have signed: *Obscure germ, remain beneath the earth. . . . I will be a flower; I must be a flower* — are the last-born of the thinker's melancholy; but at the same time it will be questioned whether the poet does not decidedly outweigh the prose-writer in his case. The reply is difficult to give; for, outside of his entirely special work as a medallion-maker of *Thoughts*, the Abbé Roux rarely, or only at a very late date, allowed himself an opportunity of moulding his prose into pieces of any length. The best thing to do is to assert that we have in him a penetrating analyst and poet, who complement each other in this diary, these *Confessions* of a solitary.

I wished to view for myself the isolation of my friend, and one fine day he received a visit from me in his exile's nest. He appeared to me like the Limousin giant, of his *Geste of Charlemagne*, with his strong, square-built form and his deep bass voice. I found him with a face large and lofty, gentle and rugged, — like those English lords of Henry VIII., colossi of the North, painted by Holbein, — and reflecting a fund of almost feminine sensibility, like the

accent of his words. With the gentleness of a child and a poet, he exhibited to me the simplicity of his life, and I departed more affected than I can express. . . .

This Bas-Limousin is a very distant country. Missions are there preached in *patois*, as will be the case with all important affairs for a long time to come, in spite of all that can be done in the matter. This people has remained hard and uncultivated, with that lack of cultivation of which certain *Thoughts* give us the most exact idea. What, then, will be the situation of a mind brought up in these melancholy surroundings? This is what I have tried to explain in my *Introduction.*

II.

I am led to speak first of all about his *thoughts* concerning *the Peasants*, which are the most interesting probably, the most original certainly, of the whole collection, and which should assure to their author a permanent reputation.

Their accent of sadness, their tinge of bitterness, have called attention to them first. Without being precisely the harshest of all, like the intimate cries, the thoughts of isolation, still they form the prelude and the corollary to these. Therefore we will begin with them.

In spite of the lusty vigor with which they overflow, — a vigor of bitterness and vain desires, — all this portion of the work is as desolate as the country which witnessed its birth. This old Limousin seems to wear mourning for its glory of other days. I shall always remember the long desolation which extends from Clermont to Tulle along the whole line of the railway. The consideration of this gloomy stretch rendered my friend's solitude all the more keen. I even passed a night at Ussel, a small historical city which is not wholly characterless. But what a flat and insipid country! . . . A land of poets, nevertheless, and of melancholy, like all moorland countries.

Quite the reverse of La Bruyère, who always retained a sweet and compassionate recollection of the country from having been brought up there, the Abbé Roux has suffered, having only come there as a man. . . . He would not say with Joubert, happy man, "It pains me to leave the country because I must separate from myself." These soliloquies with one's self predispose to evil-speaking. But "a certain sort of evil-speaking proceeds from love." I do not object to that. . . . Thus, from the day when the La Bruyère of the peasants found out how to strike his parcels of observations into medals, he did not hesitate to take possession of them.

He has branded with a red-hot iron both their oddities and their selfishness; he has exhibited the qualities of their natures in their true light; he has, in short, established in a superior manner the relations of the peasant to the country. This picture was wanting in the Museum of French Letters.[1]

It is interesting to observe how a priest who feels the charm of nature sets forth that beauty, explains its seductions in order chiefly to arrive

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[1] In spite of the acclamations which have hailed its appearance, this chapter on the *Peasant* has been generally misunderstood. In the first place, a sufficient distinction has not been made between the curé of the village, the minister of the God of charity, and the observant author who understands and, through a tendency common to moralists, generalizes his remarks. Some have thus thought him pitiless, others severe though just; others still have unexpectedly arisen to reproach him for the temper of his criticisms. . . .

To those who, like Racine's bourgeois weeping over Holofernes, have pitied the parishioners of Saint-Hilaire, beneath the author's anonymous peasants, the Abbé Roux replies with justice that all peasants do not belong to his parish. To others — to those who do not concern themselves about this ill-understood charity — he repeats that his observations are made in good faith, with equality and justice, within Christian limits, and are worthy of a priest who, without rancor, without wrath, without any personal interest, has noted down here, there, and everywhere what he has seen with his own eyes, and only what he has seen.

at the contrast between it and the antipathetic homeliness of the peasant. When I say that no one had perceived all this, I make a mistake. A powerful writer, Proudhon, in a page which the Abbé Roux has doubtless perused, has led us, as you will see, to the confession of his brutal pantheism.

The peasant is the least romantic, the least idealistic of men. Immersed in reality, he is opposed to the *dilettante*, and will never give thirty sous for the most magnificent picture of a landscape.

"He loves nature as a child loves its nurse, being less occupied by her charms, to a sense of which he is not, however, a stranger, than her fruitfulness. . . . The peasant loves nature for her fertile breasts, for the life with which she overflows. He does not touch her lightly with the eye of an artist; he caresses her with both arms like the lover in the *Song of Songs: Veni et inebriemur uberibus.*"

He has recognized the fact that in every poet of nature there is a pantheist unconscious at the least. The most religious, in the evangelical sense, — Mistral and Laprade, for example, — insensibly abandon themselves to a pagan intoxication in the presence of the larches of Ventoux or the oaks of Forez. But every poet is not a priest; and the priest will end by

so thoroughly repressing this pantheistic sentiment that it will escape from him in the presence of nature.

The Abbé Roux never depicts nature for herself. Rarely does a pleasing description temper the harshness of his observations. At the most, it is only the rehabilitation of a despised plant or animal which lightens this uniform severity. The moralist never shows us the country without showing us himself there also, indifferent and isolated.

This folk of the Bas-Limousin, coarse, rough, and heavy, but with a forcible heaviness, bears considerable resemblance in point of the distance which separates it from the great cities, to the people of ancient France, whom La Fontaine, La Bruyère, and Sévigné observed in their wretchedness. Its native vulgarity is common to all peasants of Central France. No comparison is therefore possible between it and the southern *pacan*,[1] who is acute, ingenious, clear-headed, and with whom poetical expression is as frequent as the gayety of his sun. This explains some of the objections which the Provençals have made to the severity of the Abbé Roux towards the peasants whom he observes. Nevertheless, he has his poetry, which is as wholesome within and as rough without as the

[1] Rustic.

fruit of the chestnut-tree which is so abundant in that region. The proverbs of the Bas-Limousin are full of vividly conceived comparisons which bear witness to poetical vigor. Is it not here that arose that name for chimney-sweeps, — winter-nightingales? . . . The Abbé Roux's rustic studies, the shortest of which only will figure in the *Thoughts*, also bear witness to this rough and easy forcefulness of the Limousin temperament. *Jean Rozier* is an example in point. Besides containing a great practical truth, — the intelligence of which has allowed so many superior organizations to go astray through force of habit, the abandonment of his natal speech, — he shows us a local physiognomy in high relief, and serves as a pretext for the exercise of a very curious style, like the story of *Bourassou*. The labored phrases, the constant, at times painful, effort, the original research for picturesque words and for conciseness, that conjunction of *Limousinisms* which are like the color of his genius, are certainly so many proofs of that disuse of flowing prose, to which the author has subjected himself for the very special exercise of *coining maxims*.

At all events, the *Rustic Studies* of the Abbé Roux, taken from the life, like his *Characters*, form in their entirety a very modern and very veracious chapter of the moral history of our

provinces. In all his remarks upon country life, the author does not always feel himself bound to form a conclusion — to question himself, for instance, after the manner of a psychologist, the why of the peasant's vulgar exuberance in the presence of the tranquil and starry sky, and to make subtle replies to himself, as Amiel has done, shocked by this contradiction: "Why? Through a sad and secret instinct; through the need of consciously recognizing one's own specialty as an individual, of asserting one's self, of possessing one's self exclusively, egotistically, idolatrously, of opposing one's 'I' to everything else, by setting it rudely in contrast with the nature which envelops us, with the poetry which takes us from ourselves, with the harmony which unites us to others, with the adoration which bears us towards God..."; still less to form a conclusion in which he recognizes the "rapid vision from the absolute side of the personal soul!"

No! it was far more the need of unbosoming himself than the deliberate design of writing a moral study, which guided the man whom we have designated as the La Bruyère of the Peasants. That powerful incentive, a literary confession, has led him to examine more deeply into this point than any one else; that is all. He has brought back from his search pages which are new and of the first order.

Contradictions certainly are met with here and there. Is not contradiction the characteristic of this poor, great century? But we have there, if not a study at all times equally critical, at least a great page from a moralist which will endure.

III.

Does it follow that, because the Abbé Roux has studied the peasant profoundly, he has an eminently critical spirit, and that he will bring the same penetrating analysis to bear upon other subjects less *tried* by him — such as literature and morals? I answer, that the profundity of his views upon the Peasant, rests upon the sincerity of his observation. Now, very few men of his calibre have been found in a position so hard to endure. However critical, then, the examination which the author makes of the divers springs of action in the country people, the novelty of this chapter constitutes its greatest interest.

For the spirit of criticism, in the modern sense of the word, is not the dominant note of these *Thoughts*. In the literary judgments of this book, as well as in the various studies which will form the succeeding collection, there will be found broad statements, a picturesque mode of expression, criticism of the poet or of words only, in the fashion of Saint-Victor, both superb and insufficient, — and imagination always. But

in all this a profound study of surroundings, causes, processes of the mind, have but little or no place. One does not find there, for instance, "the substantive marrow" of a Weiss or a Sarcey, — if he has not the fine judgment of the former, he has at least the extremely good sense of the other, — but a theme, a statement, both classical and poetical, of the remarks of his imagination, over which hovers something like a philosophy of history.

IV.

Up to this point we have permitted a glimpse of the influence of a wholly classical education to peep through. It is this which causes him to give to his confessions that constrained, circumscribed form which make of them a book of *Thoughts.* For I might well be accused of exaggerating the poetry exhaled by this soul, by those who, unlike myself, have not yielded to the irrresistible charm in his letters, in his private writings, all humid with melancholy; like certain English poets of *seraphism,* sensibility. If that classic imprint, which will appear on a first perusal of his book, is very stable in the style of the author, it varies at times in the guidance of his judgment. I do not think that in general he preserves sufficient moderation. Is this saying that he lacks taste? . . . I have in

my memory a little phrase of M. Brunetière, *apropos* of Galiani, which furnishes me with an exact reply: "He has not that discretion, that moderation, that eloquence, which are the very foundation of the French mind. . . ."

In fact, this powerful mind, which, I will not hesitate to make the avowal, like Galiani, would not even recoil at a play upon words, has not always been ballasted with a useful alloy. As for good sense, he certainly is not lacking on that point. It even forms a part of his force, which is also composed of superb and biblical imagery, of irony filled with spirit, of powerful antitheses, and which wells up from a deep foundation of poetry.

Let us take, for instance, his definitions of authors, in two strokes, which are like a sequel to Joubert. In these he shows himself charming and striking. That which is ingenious comes very near to being true, thought Joubert. The Abbé Roux, less profound, less studied in his definitions, is more spontaneous and more poetical. "Every thought should be a little like lightning, rapid and luminous," M. Jules Claretie has somewhere said, "and the more of this rapidity and electricity it has, the longer — unlike the lightning — it will last."

He has one of those powerful natures like Veuillot's, more commanded, perhaps, by the

temperament than by the patience of genius, — which will serve as an excuse for his faults of taste. But this poetry, weighed and restrained by the example of his models, remains classical by its symmetry, its order, and its clearness of style.

Here and there in this style, it is true, will be found distant echoes of La Bruyère, Lamennais, of Victor Hugo, even. The play upon words is familiar to him, as we have seen; thus he will say, "I have been inspired by gratitude, if not by the Graces. . . ." But this style is fine, fine with force and with poetry. Antithesis is likewise familiar to him, although he reproaches Victor Hugo with abusing it. But the antithesis of our thinker is that of Pascal or of Saint Augustine, firm and harmonious. And assuredly, the spirit of antithesis is a superb gift, just as genius is. . . .

Apart from these exuberances which constitute the reverse of the medal, the Abbé Roux's style is strongly original. Nourished with classic reminiscences, filled with the sap of the ancients, with the marrow of the lion, he avoids modern liberties of phrase. Better than that, his style is lapidary, like his handwriting, large and concise; and all variegated as it is with *limousinisms*, as I have already said, it but draws fresh savor from that fact. But the

abuse even of this charm constitutes a shocking defect. I have mentioned it to the author. He at first opposed me, and not unjustly, with the *patavinisms* of Titus Livius, which were so much enjoyed by the ancients, but then above all, with my eulogium of the *Limousin félibre*, which "would condemn me without appeal. . . ."

V.

The first movement of the author in all the fresh unconstraint of his mind will be, then, a glance cast at his solitude. He has become accustomed to this form of *thoughts*, which he already manipulates like an artist. Now a maxim will *bud*, a reflection whose all is brevity, as a sonnet comes to Soulary, for example. Under this expression of the state of his soul, as under all others which he employs concurrently, he will write above all the journal of a solitary. In fact, his real, very private, and unknown biography is in his letters and his *thoughts*. Quite the contrary of La Rochefoucauld, of La Bruyère, and of Vauvenargues, he has no fixed plan in regard to the arrangement of his book, for it is indeed a book which he intends to make of his reflections, but he unbosoms himself freely in order to relieve his soul, merely with reference to the subjects which he

will see only as they are related to his own destiny. He does not perceive, this virtuoso of his own melancholy, that he is generally only a moralist endowed with imagination or a poet.

If Flaubert was not wrong in writing that "Every work deserves condemnation in which the author can be divined," then this one is good for nothing but to throw in the fire. I prefer to think with M. Paul Bourget, that no poetical work can be necessary to another soul, if it has not first been necessary to our own. Life is the portion of that one of our works only from which we have suffered and which has healed us. And without even speaking of the moral benefit, curiosity, believe me, counts for more than half in the success of the majority of the great modern works, that curiosity which makes us seek in them the slightest traces of the life and passions of the author. In the work of the Abbé Roux, this I, so hateful, according to Pascal's maxim, is almost always exposed to view. Since this is found at the root of all psychology, why veil it with tinsel which criticism will tear away before entering upon the subject? . . . The contrary excess is equally to be avoided. If one makes one's self too explicit, leaving nothing to the investigations of the analysts, then comes along a reader who undertakes to discover something more. . . .

Our thinker's habitual disposition of mind caused him once to write to me: "Ill of long, profound, accustomed, possibly incurable sadness, I am your invalid. Scarron called himself the Queen's invalid; I am the invalid of your heart, and your cry, 'Hope!' makes me smile in a melancholy way, — me, the man who has no longer, through fatigue of knowing and foreseeing, even a gleam of illusion as to that future of which you speak to me so generously."

May I be pardoned for this quotation, but it seems to me that it provides needed information as to the state of morbid sadness which solitude, aggravating precarious health, breeds in the mind of our friend. It has been remarked elsewhere that hypochondria is frequent among moralists, who are generally valetudinarians. The good Joubert alone, perhaps, in spite of the suffering which accompanied his life, has allowed nothing of it to appear in his work. He was happy in the *mediocrity* of ambitions which did not urge him to trouble himself about his *Thoughts*. Hence they do not bear the imprint of the universal law which says to the genius of men, "Thou shalt bring forth in pain."

One day at Paris, Joséphin Soulary, who is by nature the harshest humorist in the world, was tasting in my presence, in the *Revue Lyonnaise*, where they appeared, an important series of

thoughts. I was just writing to the author. "Tell your Abbé Schoperhauer," said Soulary to me, "that I enjoy his pessimism and his sombre humor very much, for we are somewhat related on that point." I wrote down the poet's reflection, and we began to discuss the affinity which might exist between these two melancholies. The thought of his friend, Chenavard, the illustrious conversationalist who will be met with in all the memoirs of the century, then occurred to Soulary, and he was obliged to agree with me that if there are in the world, but in directions totally opposed to each other, two, . . . misanthropies which are capable of comparison, it is rather those of the great pantheist painter and of the Abbé Roux. Soulary's philosophical pre-occupation does not, in fact, exclude a certain paganism of views, a certain sensual indifference. He is, indeed, the French Horace. On the contrary, the purely social preoccupation of Chenavard implies an apostolic proselytism, which is that of a believer, after his own fashion.

The Abbé Roux was at that time ignorant of even the name of the German pessimist, any resemblance to whom was repugnant to him: "*Novelties*," he says, "arrive so late in the Bas-Limousin!" It was not what would make him enjoy them more. Pessimism, in all its forms, is

nothing but an intellectual malady, a compliant and privileged malady; that is to say, it is accessible to dilettanteism, to free thought alone.

Nevertheless, however fixed may be the obsession of our solitary, this resigned man is far from judging life to be evil in itself, of even suspecting the essence of pessimism. "Oh, if I could escape the pneumatic machine which envelopes me," he wrote to me, "how I would raise my heart and my wings on high!" This is the utmost, if he shows any misanthropy, resulting from endless disappointments and from illusions which have flown, each in turn. . . . "But," he replied to me in advance, "no one loves the good, the beautiful, and the true, more than I do; no one desires more than I do to render some one happy, or to know that one is so! . . . Come, Philintus, remember that Alceste-Montausier had the reputation of being the most virtuous man of his day."

VI.

Have I not, up to this point, too completely forgotten the priest? . . . He who has gone directly to the *Thoughts* without paying any heed to this preamble, will have speedily encountered him. As in Mme. Swetchine's drawing-room one felt the presence of the chapel, we perceive in frequenting the society of our

thinker, that the parish church is close at hand. We should be wrong in reproaching him for it; it is in this point, above all others, that his case is interesting. We have already announced him as a *Limousin Félibre*, an almost Spanish mystic, a *Theresian*, if I may put it so. Certain thoughts in the chapter, "GOD, THEOLOGY," will inform every one on this point. This comes from his property of Southerner, of poet, and from the influences of his sacerdotal youth. How that education weighs upon a life! The time passed in the seminary weighs upon the soul of every priest. When at times he exclaims or sermonizes, do not seek the cause elsewhere. You have seen our thinker, in spite of his eminently classical education, arraign Fénelon himself for his pagan literature! But the poet has remained very free beneath this apparent severity.

These *Thoughts* are, in fact, marked by a broad liberty of spirit. In this era of sceptical works, we are generally wrong in believing that the principle of authority deprives the Church and her faithful followers of all freedom of flight. We so rarely have an opportunity to judge an author who affirms a well settled and definite religious idea (instead of that vague deism, indifferent to all the rest, which only makes its appearance in the *good* parts of books), that philosophical thoughts from a

priest, under this form, and endowed with this profound interest, falling into the decaying society which surrounds us, will possess qualities to greatly amaze us. And yet, consider: there seems to be a return, among a young literary school, to the refined mysticism of certain epochs, under the double influence of Baudelaire and M. Barbey d'Aurevilly. But this group, which easily becomes sensualistic, will produce pseudo-catholicism rather than art which is healthily Christian. The Abbé Roux has nothing to do with it. A work may be human, actual, true, without being necessarily an exposition of the troubles of the flesh or of the crises of the conscience. Formerly, people knew how to search for interest elsewhere. Modern psychological criticism will end, through the abuse which it makes of physiology, by taking pleasure in the examination of intellectual maladies even to the point of confining the whole of art and nature to this!

As for knowing — and the question has been put to us — up to what degree this work will produce a favorable impression, we cannot undertake to answer in a word. According to the judgment of a literary man of 1885, it ought to prove an event on account of the depths of human nature which it discloses. Twenty years ago, the presence of a priest behind this hymn

of suffering would have called forth a frown; to-day it evokes a glance of sympathy. The truth, the naked truth, we behold, nothing else. And yet, as Amiel said, "how few original beings there are who are individual and worth the trouble of listening to!"

There is still much to criticise and much to praise in the work which I have just introduced. Nevertheless, I will stop my observations here. The friendship which attaches me to the Abbé Roux is now too absolute to allow of my pushing the analysis further in either direction.

I only ask that heed may be paid to the strange situation of the author. "You are publishing my *Thoughts*," he wrote to me; "take care. I am not sufficiently independent to seek calumnies; for I am not individual but legion, and the good Abbé Joseph Roux will bear the mountain of prejudices which weighs upon the clergy at all periods, and especially at the present one. . . . Prudence, my friend! You would have me believe that I am about to become a personage. I find some difficulty in hoping it. I shall always be a prisoner immured within walls. With a character both proud and timid, one never comes to anything."

Having dared, however, he was then obliged to wait. But few priests are capable of thus daring, and those who are remain isolated. Do

we not behold these terrible errors in all the administrations of the world? He who does more than his task lies under suspicion; he who does more than his duty is ridiculous.

The Abbé Roux has freed himself from this universal constraint. The dominant note of his *Thoughts* is long aspiration in long-continued powerlessness. And this great man of fifty who has published nothing, has written, in a style which will endure, the Christian poem of the agonies of a deserted being.

"But this is like a funeral oration," you will say to me. It is not, in truth, what I intended it to be. . . .

Think rather, friend reader, that you are present at a birth, and that you have assisted.

PAUL MARIÉTON.[1]

MARCH, 1885.

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[1] M. Paul Mariéton is *alone* responsible for the opinions expressed in this preface.

PRELUDE.

THOUGHTS AND THINKERS.

THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK.

To put forth thoughts — therein lies my consolation, my delight, my life. I too would exclaim, in another sense, "I think, therefore I am!"

*
* *

A maker of maxims is synonymous with a pessimist. (*Maximist, pessimist.*)

*
* *

"Thoughts" are fruits; words are leaves. Let us strip off the leaves! let us strip off the leaves! in order that thought, thus exposed to the light, may gain strength, beauty, and flavor.

*
* *

O, ye who pluck these "thoughts," may you, beneath their veil of verdure, find always a fragrant flower, a savory fruit!

*
* *

A monk was once asked, "How do you know the world, since you live in solitude?" "I study it in myself," he replied. Thus I catch

only a passing glimpse of society, but I observe attentively the little which I see; then I reflect upon it frequently and at length.

*
* *

Oh, the irksomeness of writing alone, of correcting alone! Who listens to me, who counsels me, who encourages me? Virgil compared himself to the bear licking its cubs to "finish" them. Happy Virgil, who worked full of hope, midway from Rome, beneath august eyes!

*
* *

Pascal is sombre, La Rochefoucauld bitter, La Bruyère malicious, Vauvenargues melancholy, Chamfort acrimonious, Joubert benevolent, Swetchine gentle.

Pascal seeks, La Rochefoucauld suspects, La Bruyère spies, Vauvenargues sympathizes, Chamfort condemns, Joubert excuses, Swetchine mourns.

Pascal is assailed by an evil spirit, La Rochefoucauld takes sides, La Bruyère has a point of view, Vauvenargues possesses toleration, Chamfort a grudge, Joubert an aspiration, Swetchine a hope.

Pascal refers everything to folly, La Rochefoucauld to a vice, La Bruyère to eccentricity, Vauvenargues to a sentiment, Chamfort to an abuse, Joubert to an ideal, Swetchine to a belief.

Pascal is profound, La Rochefoucauld penetrating, La Bruyère sagacious, Vauvenargues delicate, Chamfort paradoxical, Joubert ingenious, Swetchine contemplative.

***

It is a difficult enterprise, a delicate undertaking, to write "thoughts." What a well-informed mind, what a fertile imagination, what a just and profound feeling of things, what a happy style, is requisite to attain even mediocrity therein!

***

Why have I taken such a burden upon my shoulders? What necessity inclines me to this task? Alas! the mind of men is a mystery; and, like the plant, each one of us naturally appropriates and assimilates that about him which responds to that which is within him.

***

The commentator of a poet habitually inclines to eulogy: 'tis a question of showing that one has taste. The commentator of a maxim-maker leans towards blame: 'tis a question of showing that one has judgment.

***

Of all that I write will anything survive, and what part of it will survive? If I win renown, to what shall I owe it? To my *Great Limousin*

Dictionary? To my *Limousin Epic?* To these *Thoughts?* I should like to know, but how can I know? Let us leave to the future its secret, and trust in God.

*
* *

". . . It was a melancholy humor, produced by the chagrin of solitude, which first put this dream of meddling with writing into my head; and then, finding myself utterly destitute and void of any other matter, I took myself as argument and subject." (*Essays*, Book II. Chap. VIII.)

These reasons of Montaigne are mine also, with the difference of his marvellous intellect, his high position, his great learning, and his rare experience. That "chagrin of solitude," which he knew during a part of his life only, has been my travelling companion since my youth. Moreover, the *Essays*, the fruit of a melancholy which was foreign to his natural disposition, differ greatly from my rough sketch, where much sadness and even a little bitterness are perceptible.

I.

LITERATURE, POETS.

I.

WHOEVER publishes a work which is not mediocre creates for himself a number of friends and of enemies, either known or unknown.

II.

The real gives exactness, the ideal adds the truth. The realist reproduces only things, the idealist "invents" beings.

III.

I should define poetry as the exquisite expression of exquisite impressions.

IV.

Poetry is always all-powerful over souls which have not become cloyed.

V.

The artist being spirit and flesh, must guard against the purely ideal, that is to say, against

spirit which is not united to a body; and from the purely real, that is to say, from body which is not united to a spirit.

VI.

Great souls are harmonious.

VII.

The desert attracts the nomad; the ocean, the sailor; the infinite, the poet.

VIII.

What a beautiful language is Latin! I love it. It has been said of a Latin scholar, that he spoke Latin in the cradle. I learned Latin at college, but with as much heart as though it had been the tongue of my father and mother. I have it not in my memory; I have it in my entrails, so to speak. For a long time I thought in Latin, in order to speak in French. More than that, both my prose and my verse swarm with latinisms to this day. Premeditated? No, but they have come of their own will.

IX.

Virgil is quoted, and with reason; Homer is little quoted, and this is wrong.

Virgil and Homer possess family traits; the

same blood flows in the veins of both, it is true, but Homer begat Virgil.

How Homer pleases me, read either before or after Virgil, with his loquacity of a Greek, his garrulity of an old man! Virgil is more the man, Homer more the poet. Homer takes entire possession of the entire mind. He is not the voice of a polished age, of an age which was unique; he is the genius of the centuries of old. There are above Homer and his sublime children's stories, only Job and Moses, those incomparable secretaries of the true God.

The people of our colleges, who are tolerably ignorant of the language *of sovereign harmonies*, should have spared Homer their dithyrambic commentaries; woe to whosoever complains of it! Monuments should not be built about; Homer should not be built about. Of what use are the house and the men, who, viewed from this lofty monument, have the appearance of ant-heaps and ants?

Homer is such that all comparison, far from belittling him, renders him yet greater.

X.

Homer calls the sun "the eye and the ear of the world." Granted, so far as the "eye" is concerned, but "the ear" — what has the ear to

do here? Does not that strange word contain the germ of many a recent discovery about the transmission of sound by light, of light by sound?

Every language has terms with two uses to express the phenomenon of sound and the phenomenon of light. "Son éclatant," a piercing sound; "lumière éclatante," a dazzling light, says the Frenchman. Nevertheless, confess that no expression is so true, so picturesque, so bold as that word from old Homer.

XI.

Happy Virgil! How he has been petted, coddled, caressed, admired, spoiled by messieurs the scholiasts! Each one of them has wished to engrave his own name beneath that name, with the etching-tool, the knife, it matters not how. The greater part of the editions of Virgil appear speckled with exclamation points, laudatory parentheses, blustering signatures. One would say that it was a photograph of Pausilippus with the sentences which load down the walls of the marble niche where sleeps the swan of Mantua.

I am one of those who love Virgil, not because of the throng which roars about his work, but for his own sake, for his pure and melodious soul. How can one penetrate to the man himself through so many obstacles, hold con-

verse with him quite alone, heart to heart? King, dismiss your court; friend, disperse these profane ones! Poetry is a mysterious *tête-à-tête.* Speak to me, speak to us, and may nothing and nobody again interpose between us two!

XII.

Tu Marcellus eris. . . . "At this point, Octavia became ill. On recovering from her swoon, she had ten great sesterces counted out to the poet for each verse. . . ."

This episode effects our *Latin* people deeply; I suspect the sesterces, those great sesterces, of having something to do with the matter: "Happy poet! Generous Princess!" and all the rest of it.

Those sesterces spoil those verses for me; their Octavia spoils my Virgil for me.

XIII.

Poeta est omnis scriptor. "The poet is all the writer." Who uttered that profound saying? Cicero? Quintilian? Saint Jerome? Saint Augustine? Saint Isidore? No, it was a grammarian, long ago forgotten, Despautère! How far removed are we from those happy epochs when even the schoolmen thought grandly!

XIV.

Jesus Christ came, the king of souls, the king of minds. Souls were long in becoming Christianized; minds preoccupied with Homer and with Virgil were still more tardy. Ambrose and Claudian vied with each other in saying, "Olympus." Ausonius sang *Cupid crucified.* The same incense burned upon the same altar to Jesus and to Jupiter; the same lyre vibrated for the God of Ida and the God of Tabor; there was a daily conflict between the two worships which triumphed in turn, at the family hearth, on the public square, in the senate. The poets, who, like the seas and mountains, are rich in images and echoes; the poets faithfully reproduced this contrast in their works, and then, routine is so powerful! Education, pulled in two directions between the past and the future, was not of a piece; Christian in the basilicas, it must needs be pagan in the gymnasiums. Learned antiquity obtruded itself; Moses, David, and Job on one side, on the other, Homer, Pindar, and Virgil shared the heart of man. Peter, with the Church, conquered the pagan world, without doubt; but Cæsar, with the Empire, held his own; and he will never abdicate all authority over the mind.

Now, poetry belongs too much to this world to be entirely independent of Cæsar, too human to allow of anything human being a stranger to it. Poets — I mean the best — will always have in their heads a good deal of paganism.

There are souls which are Christian by nature, wrote Tertullian. Granted! But one is not *born* a Christian; one becomes so, in poetry as in religion, by the resolute and constant effort which is inspired and aided by grace from on high.

Happy are the poets, really worthy but so rare, alas! who believe, hope, and love! Their faith will not be deceived, nor their hope confounded, nor will their love be vain and sterile; like those trees of the Orient which first bear flowers and afterwards their leaves, they will blossom before men in time, and will be clothed with verdure in eternity before God.

All the peoples of Latium contributed to form the speech of Rome, so that that speech took and kept the name of the Latin tongue.

XV.

All the peoples of Latium at first, and of the Universe later on, contributed to form the Empire of Rome; and that Empire took and kept the name of the Roman Empire.

The *Roman* Empire, the *Latin* tongue! A difference of denominations full of mystery and suggestion!

XVI.

Two sorts of writers possess genius: those who think, and those who cause others to think.

XVII.

That which we know is but little; that which we have a presentiment of is immense; it is in this direction that the poet outruns the learned man.

XVIII.

The Greeks called the Furies Εὐμενίδες, the Eumenides, the kindly ones; the Hebrews called death *mansuetudo*, gentleness, and they said, *gustare mortem*, to enjoy death.

All peoples have these mysterious euphemisms.

XIX.

The Roman people, according to Cicero's avowal, was above all a religious people; that is why *facere* signified to sacrifice, to perform the action of all others. With the Greeks, a poetical and artistic people, Ποιεῖν denoted another very excellent action; to invent, to imagine, to *versify*.

XX.

France has never brought forth an epic poem since the Middle Ages. But because France has deserted the way of poetry, and is still awaiting a work as great as herself, does this mean that that epic monument will never arise? Does this mean that it never has arisen? A people is one, but it is also multiple!

If our mother country is now reputed sterile, shall we forget that she was formerly fruitful? She was fruitful to such a point that the nations who deny that she possesses the epic gift owe to her the poems on which they pride themselves. Whence, if you please, did Ariosto, Tasso, Milton, Goethe, etc., — whence did they draw their inspiration? Was it not from our troubadours, was it not from our trouvères? Charlemagne, Roland, Merlin, Renaud, Lancelot, Amadys, etc., are certainly French names, French heroes.

Ah! our language has changed too often and our word has been spoken too soon!

No matter! they had the epic inspiration, they knew the accent of the epic lay, our trouvères of the Middle Ages! If the syllables employed by those strong men had not suffered from the instability of time, if the edifices of

their imagination had resisted revolutions, like the stone structures bequeathed by other artists who were their contemporaries, the same admiration would hail all these works, differing in material but alike in genius : and as it is no longer said as in the age of Fénelon, that our Gothic monuments bear witness against our architectural genius, even so it will cease to be said that we are poor in epics, we who possess a score of incomparable *chansons de geste*.

XXI.

The sentimental is dangerous in piety, in morality, in literature, in everything

XXII.

Say not, "That man chose a bad time to publish his book." One must publish when one can, in season or out of season. To-day is in our hand; the past is there no longer; will there be any future? Why prefer that which is uncertain to the certain? The hour is unpropitious : will waiting bring a better one? One must breathe, one must publish, in the present. The work which has been published will, in the long run, free itself from unfavorable circumstances, and finish by being estimated at its proper value.

XXIII.

A certain poetic perfection reminds one of an over-ripe fruit in a fair way to decay. Lucan polished his verses more than Virgil did; Silius also, and Statius. Racine polished less than Vigny or Leconte de Lisle. What does this signify? Are Virgil and Racine on that account authors of the decadence? Tell that to some one else!

XXIV.

"A noble spirit cannot find in a narrow circle the development of his being. He must learn to endure praise and blame. . . . Then retreat no longer lulls him to sleep with its flattering illusions. An enemy will not, a friend dares not, spare him."

How often have these words which Goethe puts into the mouth of Tasso (Act I., Scene II.) troubled me! Danger from flattering illusions, in the retreat which hems me in; friends who dare not recommend me; enemies who overthrow me with a blow of their tongue, and exterminate me with the tip of their little finger; jealous people above, by my side, below, whom I cannot call by this name because they have, in the eyes of men, more past, present, and future than I have myself; prejudices all the

more impossible to combat because they are concealed behind a semblance of sympathy, — all this, at intervals, throws me into a sadness which is nearly akin to death.

XXV.

Classic tragedy, by which I mean that of Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire, employs very solémn language and observes a very wise course of conduct, but one which savors too much of conventionality, and takes too little interest in real history, in persons, camps, and places.

Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Scythians, Parthians, Gauls, are moulded in the same manner, trained and costumed in the same manner. Man, who is one and the same only at bottom, always appears uniform in spite of the very varied manners.

The drama — that of Shakespeare, of Goethe, and of Schiller — better represents the man like ourselves, his form, temperament, character, his surroundings. Less conventionality permits of more naturalness. The personage who poses and perorates makes way for the person who acts. The types are more *perfect*, humanly speaking.

In the drama the idea is more interesting, the field broader, the design bolder, the coloring

more lively, the details more frank and more familiar, the inspiration more original.

Tragedy appeals above all to the erudite; the drama speaks to all mankind.

The plans, the parts, the tirades, the rhythm, I know not what impersonal and routine element, which make one listen without great surprise, characterize tragedy.

The dramas of Shakespeare, of Goethe, of Schiller, even in translations, even badly translated, fix the attention, transport, agitate, in a singular manner. In the presence of the personages introduced upon the scene, of their words, their tears, their aspirations, their struggles with others or with themselves, each person recognizes himself, and like the slave of Terence he exclaims, *Homo sum; nihil humani a me alienum puto.*

XXVI.

Persons of delicate taste endure stupid criticism better than they do stupid praise.

XXVII.

Calderon: Happy Spain, where an author can write virtuous dramas, Christian dramas, Catholic dramas, devout dramas! Calderon could do all this tranquilly, simply, sublimely.

In the Middle Ages the clergy of France were

dramatists, and what is more, *impresarii*. Would our critics who pardon the Spanish priest Calderon for having been a dramatic poet, permit a French priest to write dramas or melodramas, religious, of course, and to have them played? If he came to grief, what monkey-like laughs! What peacock cries if he succeeded!

XXVIII.

Lope de Vega: He is not a garden drawn with a chalk-line, cut up into symmetrical squares, pierced with long, straight alleys, such as his quasi-contemporary Le Nôtre designed. No: Lope de Vega is the Spain of the harsh sierras, of irregular cities, of motley costumes. Lope de Vega is not a classic after the fashion of France; nevertheless, he is Greek and Latin, vying with Corneille and Racine; and he is more of a man and more national than they.

XXIX.

The Duke de Saint-Simon: Scrupulous even to the point of asking himself whether he has been slanderous enough.

XXX.

Boileau in one of his epigrams, said of himself: "Whence comes the black chagrin which

one reads upon his visage? It is from seeing himself so badly engraved."

How much more just chagrin would he not display to-day at seeing himself so badly known!

The eighteenth century abated much of the great esteem accorded to Boileau by the century of Louis XIV. Reputations always suffer these reverses. Happy are those which rise again undiminished! Happy are those which do not lose in the inevitable storm the last plume from their pinions!

The *great man* Boileau has, perhaps, not emerged from the trial without damage. Slag abounds about the anvil.

Where he makes and remakes his work with more patience than art, with more labor than inspiration, one hears too distinctly the noise of the bellows, and far too much of the fine sound of the flame which roars and crackles and rebounds.

His work fills a small volume. A strict sorting would reduce it to the dimensions of a booklet.

But the *good man* Boileau is ignored more than is fitting. The man surpasses the writer; his character far surpasses his talent.

Possessed of free and lofty judgment, he pronounces upon merits as posterity does.

Possessed of a loyal conscience, he under-

stands "how to distinguish the poet from the man of honor."

A proud soul, he does not excuse himself for having found the king's verses wretched; he does not conceal his scorn for the Marquis de Saint-Aulaire, an academic candidate.

He says to Racine, who was troubled about Athalie: "It is the best thing you have done!"

He replies to the astonished Louis XIV., "The greatest writer of the century is Molière!"

He recognizes in his letters, if not in his satires, even the talent of Quinault, even that of Boursault.

He takes it ill that the great Corneille, when aged and infirm, is neglected, and demands that his own pension shall be transferred to him; it is with the same heart that he congratulates, that he consoles, Racine on receiving a pension of four thousand livres, while he himself has but two thousand.

And his obstinate friendship for the persecuted Arnaud! and his delicate attentions to Olivier Patru, whom he assisted without the latter's knowledge!

Ye men of letters, who, rightly or wrongly, esteem Boileau a mediocre genius, admire at least, imitate above all his noble spirit and his generous character!

XXXI.

Corneille, Racine: The sun does not enter without difficulty into his glory; he must first contend with the mists below, against the clouds above . . . but at last he prevails, and darts forth free and splendid.

Such was Corneille, such Racine.

A first flight set a deep gulf between them and their masters of yesterday, which soon became an impassable breach.

As neither their goals nor the roads traversed were the same, the obstacles were different.

Corneille had only to vanquish the mediocre; that does not constitute his glory. His glory lies in having grown great by himself, without a model. Racine had to reach Corneille. Without being his peer, he was his equal, a supreme triumph!

Corneille has an austere and rather harsh visage; his language is grave and rather rugged; he is a father whom one respects, a master whom one accepts with his defects and his qualities. Racine has a caressing voice, and a sweet, sympathetic, gracious air: he is a brother, a friend.

Corneille takes possession of our mind by conquering it. Racine plays about our heart and penetrates it little by little.

[illegible]

[illegible] Racine [illegible]

[illegible]

Corneille says, and it is applause:—

Je ne dois qu'à moi seul toute ma renommée
Tout mon gloire est dans moi.

Racine says, in pleasing with a smile of love:—

Je ne vous vois point, je ne sais quelle grâce,
Qui ne trouve à toujours et jamais ne me lasse.

I find in you only, I know not what grace,
Which charms ever, does never, and naught can efface.

Corneille is the painter of haughty sentiments, of heroic resolutions. He is Rodrigue hesitating between love and honor, then immolating the father of Chimène; Horace preferring his country to his family, and Rome to his child; *Camille* constrained to admire the conqueror of her husband; Médée opposing her "I!" to hostile fortune; Pauline faithful to memory and duty: he elevates the soul.

Racine paints the storms of the heart, its errors, its falls, its returns. He is Andromaque sacrificing her griefs and her hatreds to the

safety of her son; Hermione cursing the man whom she adjured to kill Pyrrhus; Achille casting forth insults at the father of his betrothed; Phèdre, in spite of herself, "perfidious, incestuous": he moves the heart.

Corneille takes most of his types from a world which is, perhaps, chimerical, but which he causes to appear real by dint of ideality. What these personages think is superhuman. So much sublimity speedily fatigues man who is avaricious in the matter of admiration.

Racine takes man as he is, "wavering and various, full of contradictions," approving what is good and doing that which is evil, ceasing never until he has accomplished "the crime which promised him pleasure and happiness, and which will bring him only remorse," touching in defeat, but not less admirable in his triumph.

Behold this statue: the forms are very virile, almost coarse; the muscles are strained and prominent. One could count the network of the veins, so much of energy and power is there in this robust body. Such is Corneille.

This other marble is of irreproachable purity. The eye glides without displeasure along its soft contours; the limbs are full, dimpled, harmonious; the attitude is easy, noble, charming in its dignity and unconstraint. Such is Racine.

Corneille is exclusive; his heroes are per-

sonal. The savage heroism of the Horaces; the chivalrous honor of Rodrigue and of Chimène; the clemency of Auguste; the renunciation of Polyeucte belong to a superior and also to a singular order of things. Racine, more comprehensive, likes to generalize. Does he draw the portrait of a man or of humanity? Phèdre, for instance, is not so much the lover of Hyppolite as passion personified; passion such as can exist in a woman, without distinction of either time or country.

There is something of Corneille in *Britannicus* and *Mithridate;* of Racine in *Le Cid* and *Polyeucte*. Racine, in *Bérénice*, defeated Corneille; would he have defeated him in *Rodogune?*

Corneille and Racine attempted comedy, each with the genius which distinguishes him. Corneille is original; he invents. Racine imitates; he is original, nevertheless.

Corneille shows man as he should be, — good, generous, faithful to justice and to honor; he prompts to duty by preaching virtue. Racine contents himself with representing vice, — a representation which is, to tell the truth, rather attractive, but edifying when analyzed to the last degree, if one considers the calamities which vice sooner or later produces.

Corneille needed a commentary, since too many defects are mingled with his beauties.

The commentary of Racine is wholly comprised in these three words of Voltaire, "Beautiful! harmonious! sublime!"

After the same brilliant beginnings and the same brilliant successes, what a different ending!

Corneille was extinguished behind the clouds which had veiled his dawn. He, whom the theatres welcomed with sudden applause, he before whom kings rose to their feet, who had made the great Condé weep, passed from earth poor, obscure, forgotten. Like that Pompée whom he had put upon the stage in better days, he had lived too much by a day, and had come to hear the wish expressed that he could "be again the Corneille, both of the *Cid* and of *Horace*."

Racine was buried in his triumph. He did not live long enough; he bore away with him as many hopes as regrets. His legacy, at the threshold of the tomb, was his masterpiece, one of the masterpieces of the human mind, — *Athalie*.

Many prefer Corneille; many like Racine better. All are wrong and all are right.

XXXII.

Before the Renaissance religion possessed an interest, even by the family fireside, even in the public square. One was not a Christian in

church only. In order to understand one's self, in order to make one's self understood of others, the poet thought and spoke as a Christian. The Renaissance, which again put to question what the Gospel had settled, came; it shook the old man which was not dead but only sleeping; it stirred up that profane, corrupt, untractable, and mocking depth which exists in every man, and under the pretence of liberty and art, abandoned itself, soul and body, to harmonious falsehoods, to elegant vice, to erudite perversity. All sorts of shameful complicities were established in broad daylight or in the dark, between the mind which was weary of thinking well, and the heart which was tired of wishing well; a mirage appeared across the way, which was taken for paradise. Love decreased, faith diminished, hope fell lower than the heart. That new sense which Jesus Christ had given to man as restored and completed by baptism, made way for the depraved sense of which the Apostle speaks. Once again, all was God except God himself; "the Prince of this world," after a disgrace of many centuries, remounted his throne, and pagan civilization flourished once more.

What is Villon? an obscene pagan; Marot? a frivolous pagan; Ronsard? a learned pagan; Malherbe? a purist pagan. Boileau himself is a pagan; Racine a pagan also. Jodelle sacri-

ficed "for luck" a buck to the god Bacchus, according to the Greek rite; Boileau gravely invoked, with his wig on his head, that Phœbus and that Pegasus who made the augurs, who were contemporaries of Cicero, laugh, and Horace and Varro, the table-guests of Augustus, yawn. The narrow and monotonous college moulded minds which remained faithful all their lives to the form received.

Where is Jesus? Will he be found after three days, in the Temple? How is he to be found if he is not sought? The eighteenth century takes nothing seriously, not even Pegasus and Phœbus. One could not say that it believed in God, if it did not recognize him after its own fashion by blaspheming him. This third paganism, in which Voltaire alone is God, savors of the gaming-house and the brothel, while awaiting the scaffold promised to the pagan André Chénier. . . .

Later on, the pagan rut, which was badly filled in at the moment, is becoming visibly hollowed out, is now full of mire, and will soon, perhaps, be filled with blood. Oh! when shall we renounce paganism, with all its works and pomps, and become Christians only, entirely Christians, Christians in everything and everywhere, Christians in thought, in word, in deed, in writing?

XXXIII.

You do not know Oriens. When he becomes inflamed, you think he is strange, but he is only inspired; you think him violent when he is indignant, — he is only generous; fretful when he complains, — he is only tender hearted. Oriens is sensitive, very sensitive. Very little of this appears; it is within, "in that spot where lies the heart," that Oriens is particularly alive to feeling. There is his sorrowful part. Oriens loves to distraction the good and the beautiful. All that is false, bad, hideous, makes him leap and cry aloud. All that might be very good, but is only a little good; very true, but is not sufficiently so; very beautiful, but is so only in half measure, pains him. Ah! leave him his repugnances, and his heart-heaviness, peculiar to a nature, proud, delicate, and noble! Do not fear that it will prove widely contagious! Neither examples nor exhortations will be lacking to dissuade or correct those who would imitate Oriens!

XXXIV.

What remains of Segrais, Racan, Bertaut, Desportes, etc.? Hardly a stanza, at most a tirade. And yet their talent was remarkable; and their names will survive in collections of poetry and in anthologies.

Oh! poets of the present day, romanticists, Parnassians, etc., are you sure of leaving even a name?

XXXV.

It is a remarkable fact, that not one of the numerous epic enterprises in France since the Middle Ages, has either succeeded or deserved to succeed. Neither Du Bartas, nor Lemoine, nor Chapelain, nor twenty others have broken the charm. Voltaire by his *Henriade* has consecrated our reputation for impotence, and the proverb has prevailed, that "the Frenchman has not an epic head." Portugal has Camoëns; Spain, Ercilla; Italy, Tasso; England, Milton; Germany, Klopstock; France, nothing! It will be said, "The epoch of the great epics is over." So it was said in England before *Paradise Lost;* in Germany, before *The Messiah.*

What is the cause of our poverty? To what must our disgrace be attributed? Du Bartas is not read because of his superannuated style? But *La Chanson de Roland* is still older, and it is admired. Lemoine is not read because of his bad taste? But Milton abounds in grotesque inventions and ridiculous expressions, and he is admired. Chapelain, because of his harshness and his coldness? But Klopstock also was cold and rugged, and he is admired. Du Bartas had

genius, Lemoine had genius, Chapelain had genius; more than that, they were believers. Du Bartas adored the Word of God in the Bible, vying in that respect with Klopstock and Milton; Chapelain adored it in the Gospel, equally with Camoëns, Tasso, and Ercilla; Lemoine was as pious as a Jesuit; and yet they are only recalled with a shrug of the shoulders, or a yawn indulged in with closed mouth!

Who knows? Du Bartas, Lemoine, Chapelain, properly translated into Italian or English, would, perhaps, appear new in their splendor and grace.

The epic poem, frightfully trampled under foot by the author of the *Art of Poetry*, had passed for dead for a long time, when, towards the close of the eighteenth century, Gilbert suddenly proclaimed the great news, "*Thomas is in labor with a great epic poem!*"

After *La Pétréide*, an abortion, came *Philippe Auguste*, still-born.

Then the wind veered to the didactic poem; and *The Three Kingdoms*, *The Seasons*, *The Months*, *Navigation*, *Painting*, *Plants*, etc., winged their heavy flight towards the unknown, far away, so far that no one has heard them mentioned since.

It was said that the epic was not only dead, but well and thoroughly buried. It was both

said and thought, — while immortal, it emerged from the tomb, transfigured like the butterfly.

In spite of Boileau's oracle, in spite of so many epic catastrophes which confirmed him, in spite of the opinion which held that the case had been adjudged finally and without appeal, the epic, the Christian epic claimed its place again in the light of the sun.

It sang of God, of heaven and hell, of the angels and the saints; of man — his sin, his exile, his redemption, his approaching reconciliation; of the priest — his humble kingdom, his obscure heroism. It was Christian, as I have said; it was not Catholic. Heresy is also Christian! Schism is also Christian! The truth was received, subject to correction. Under the pretext of art, in reality out of human respect, this was lopped off, that was altered. People thought to embellish what they merely glossed over. To the immaculate and only robe of the Church, borrowed stuffs, of which she would none, were stitched. "Glorification!" affirmed the poet; "Profanation!" replied the priest.

Witness, *La Divine Epopée* of Alexandre Soumet, and *Jocelyn*, by Alphonse de Lamartine.

The one said that; the other said it to himself. Fatal error! They understood it too late.

In truth, the soul often dreams imperti-

nences. Is it in the wrong? If it be, then the lyre cannot be in the right.

If Lamartine and Soumet had listened to their faith and not to a vain and culpable whim, how much their talent would have been increased in its sweep! and how much higher would their names have risen, borne by those two angelic wings, "truth and poetry"!

XXXVI.

Certain persons are persuaded that, in order to be a writer of merit, there is required neither reason, nor judgment, nor knowledge of men, nor experience of things, nor assiduous study, nor persevering exercise, but only an unconscious, involuntary, instinctive something, which they call talent.

XXXVII.

Antique art clothed the human body in modesty and majesty; modern art unclothes even the nude. It is immodest, and sometimes even impudent. Athens diffused the soul over the flesh; Paris diffuses the flesh over the soul. The Greek statue blushed; the French statue causes blushes.

XXXVIII.

Malherbe raved over Seneca; Corneille over Lucan. These two Spaniards matched these

two Normans. The "high-flown" is the style of these four geniuses.

XXXIX.

Shakespeare: Greater than history, as great as poetry, he alone would suffice for the literature of a nation.

Addison: Shakespeare is an ocean; Addison an aquarium.

Milton: He sings ecstasy like Gabriel, hate like Lucifer, love like Eve, repentance like Adam.

Goldsmith: His *Vicar of Wakefield*, translated by Charles Nodier, attaches itself to the memory as with nails of gold.

Walter Scott: History lives again in his romances, which are so upright, so delicate, so true, when he resists the temptation to blacken the monks.

Thomas Moore: What a patriotic perfume in his verses, which fly as light and fresh as the breezes!

Byron: A pure blood, slender, proud, bold, impatient of the rein, an enemy of the spur, intractable under the whip, and who is counted vicious, and is only fantastic.

XL.

Each person alights by instinct upon the books which respond to the needs of his nature.

XLI.

Voltaire allowed this phrase to escape him: "Chaulieu is the first of neglected poets . . ." The first of neglected poets, O Voltaire! is the author of *La Henriade*, and of so many other poems; the author of *Zaïre*, and so many other tragedies. Few poets versify as badly as he.

XLII.

Since Voltaire's day we grin; we no longer laugh.

XLIII.

Never did writers have less sensibility and say more about it than those of the eighteenth century.

XLIV.

Lemière: A hard pebble which emits sparks.

Bernis: Always nature, never the natural.

Dorat: Between caterpillar and butterfly.

Écouchard Lebrun: A virile head, the soul of a eunuch.

Malfilâtre: An abortive genius.

Gentil-Bernard: An impotent man who is always talking of marriage.

Piron: An original improviser; a commonplace writer.

XLV.

The name is the man; renown is the writer.

XLVI.

Goethe: A German drinking-cup engraved at Corinth.

Schiller has put into a drama the history which he read in a dream.

Klopstock: A mortuary pall sown with tears of silver.

Bürger has written ballads which are epic poems.

Wieland has composed an epic poem which is only a ballad.

Hoffmann has caught a glimpse of a whole world of fancy through the smoke of his pipe, as one views an eclipse through a bit of smoked glass.

XLVII.

In matters of art, quality should be preferred to quantity; and if etymology is right, nothing is *elegant* which has not been culled out.

XLVIII.

Jean Baptiste Rousseau: An echo of David, a reflection of Pindar, a shade of Horace.

Beaumarchias: A happy autumn day, against which the fall of a dead leaf strikes here and there with a sinister sound.

Buffon: A head of gold, a breast of silver, legs of brass, feet of clay, like the statue of Daniel.

Voltaire: The spirit of a courtier and the heart of a courtisan.

Laharpe: Much facility, a little talent, no genius.

Marmontel: An aviary wherein are many sorts of birds, with the exception of the eagle and the dove.

XLIX.

The poet sees everything in the present, like God.

L,

André Chénier: A beautiful Athenian temple without an altar to the unknown God.

Parny: A dung-heap which smells and glitters.

Baour-Lormian: A great butterfly, caught in the strings of a harp.

Collin d'Harleville: He listens to his own talk, and gazes at his own laugh.

Berchoux: His rhymes fall slow, heavy, stifling, like the rain of roses at the feast of Heliogabalus.

LI.

Expressions which one chances upon have something antique about them, I know not what.

LII.

Vigny: Fingers of rose, tears of pearl, like the Aurora of Homer.

Hég. Moreau: A spoiled apple which is still unripe, and which must be carefully cleansed before one tastes it.

Sainte-Beuve: What poetry in his prose, and what prose in his poetry!

Auguste Barbier: Plenty of thunder-claps, little or no lightning.

LIII.

Auguste Brizeux, in *Les Bretons*, runs the risk of bursting the veins in his neck in his desire to swell the horn of Armor. One thinks one is listening to some ancient bard translated by Baour-Lormian. He has transgressed the precept of Horace, "to avoid a burden beyond his strength."

LIV.

Since modern poetry, rightly or wrongly, handles the graver's tool by preference, Soulary is certainly a master-graver. One experiences in the eye and hand, while reading him, the sensation of an amphora or a cratera, which one seems to see and to touch. But why does rationalism twine about these murrhine vases like a crack of misfortune?

LV.

Nowadays the literature of children abounds. Hugo, Ségalas, Ortolan, Beauchène, Jean Aicard, Ratisbonne, have vied in singing the

children. Eugénie de Guérin also wished to sing them. This vein is novel, this vein is rich; I do not deny it, and I complain of nothing except that this literature of the children is not unfrequently childish.

LVI.

There is no complaint that there are too many painters, too many musicians, but the opinion exists that there are too many poets. Why?

Painting, music, are, as trades, still endurable; poetry, unless it is a real vocation, scandalizes. Being more divine, one wishes it to be more discrete; being less rare, it appears less precious; noble above all, it loses more when it becomes unworthy.

LVII.

The poet, the artist, the saint, say incessantly, "Again! higher!" The *beyond* attracts them ever. What they hold is little to them. The anguish which they suffer marks, if it does not measure, the happiness which they long for. And they struggle, and lament, and strive, and tax their ingenuity for the love of that shore, "further on," of which Virgil speaks: *ripæ ulterioris amore.*

LVIII.

Jacques Delille is a poet-professor who is very clever in treating a given subject. His

"poetry" is neither a field nor a meadow, nor even a garden, but a cellar, an herbarium, garnished with dried fruits and dead flowers. His tears are deliberate, his smile studied. He excites himself coolly. His tirades are very ingenious pieces which show the springs that move them. He proceeds by articles, like the vulgar cook. He *interprets* nature as he did Virgil, with his head, not with his heart. He is a mummy which possesses the attitude but not the movement of life; he is the animal caught in the ice at the moment of his supreme effort, which is always on the point of beginning and never will begin. Praxiteles gave animation to stone; Delille petrifies thought, sentiment, the image. He is the fountain of Saint-Alyre of poetry. . . .

LIX.

Paul-Louis Courrier: Never, thanks to him, have words seemed more synomyous than style and stiletto.

George Sand: Like Circe the enchantress, she transforms those whom she enamors into beasts.

LX.

The task of demolishing Chateaubriand has been attempted. Saint-Beuve multiplied himself in order to attain his level. . . . Vain effort!

Try as one will to uncrown, to dismantle him, he can never be lessened to such a degree that he will not still overtop by head and shoulders the most supercilious of his enemies.

LXI.

Victor Hugo: This manly genius always strikes strongly if he does not often strike justly. Not content with wandering from the question, he talks wildly. It is himself that he pursues, that he admires, that he loves, that he adores, himself always, himself everywhere, himself alone!

What a magnificent career!

What a magnificent career he has run badly!

LXII.

Madame de Girardin: She sings badly, but oh! the wondrous prattle.

She combats Paris, its vices, its absurdities, as Clorinda warred against Tancred, considerately.

LXIII.

Every woman who writes immodestly, lives in the same way.

LXIV.

It is in vain that Eugéne de Géurin praises Maurice; the more she recommends him, the more she effaces him.

The love which she bore her brother greatly scandalized many literary persons. Their corruption thought it perceived therein a nameless perversity. The wretches!

Eugénie never rests from loving. She ardently desires literary glory for Maurice, and above all, that celestial glory which is far preferable. This anguish of a Christian sister is something new in French literature. One admires and loves this sweet, pious Eugénie, devoted in life and death. As for Maurice, he is only insipid and colorless. He has some imagination, no character. He does nothing but flutter about in a fickle, or, what is worse, an undecided, way.

Maurice disenchants, even in his finest passages, by a certain school-boy accent. *Le Centaure* is only a brilliant imitation of Bitaubé, of Chateaubriand and of Quinet. Eugénie conceals, perhaps ignores, her art, which is exquisite. She appears solicitous of writing well, without, for that reason, believing herself to be a writer. She is not so much conscious of herself as she divines herself. Beneath the evident desire of pleasing her brother, a hack writer, peeps the desire of sooner or later interesting the public. She is careful of her phrasing, somewhat as the naïve young girl cares for her face, with a coquettish innocence.

LXV.

Literature was formerly an art and finance a trade: to-day it is the reverse.

LXVI.

We write numerous works in order to multiply our chances with posterity, as one takes several tickets in a lottery in order to be more sure of winning. But very often a single ticket brings happiness, a single book brings fame.

LXVII.

Vigny is above all things Greek, Musset above all Gallic; Vigny has more variety, Musset more spirit; Vigny more art, Musset more naturalness; Vigny is delicate, Musset is fine; Vigny is ingenious, Musset is spiritual.

Vigny was at first biblical, almost religious; then he gradually became sceptical. Musset, who was for a long time obscene and impious, knew remorse towards the end, and perhaps repentance. I speak of the poet, for the man, less hard to please than the Duke of Clarence, had early disappeared in a cask of gin.

LXVIII.

Jules Janin: He writes; afterwards he thinks.

Charles Nodier: A little of everything, not much of anything.

Joseph Autran: A small shell, within which roars the great sea.

Béranger: The collection of his songs at first passed for a monument of patriotism. The time will come, if it has not already come, when this same collection will be a curious repertory, neither more nor less, of impieties, impurities, and vanities, which passed current in a great disordered nation, at a sad epoch in its history.

Casimir Delavigne: Too different from Tyrtæus and too much like Racine.

LXIX.

The majority of the writers of genius recall the *Mormolukéion* of the Greek theatre, tragic on one side, comic on the other; they willingly throw in a burst of laughter between two serious works or two pathetic tirades.

LXX.

Labor does not exclude naturalness, neither does facility imply it.

LXXI.

Science is for those who learn; poetry, for those who know.

LXXII.

Etymology, true etymology, is good and useful. It is profitable for the grammarian, the

poet, the orator, the historian, the philosopher. Words are shells. Open the shell, you will find the kernel which will delight you.

LXXIII.

The Muses love not tumult any more than bees love it. *Musæ serenæ*, said the ancients.

Let us be gentle, let us be pacific, let us be thoughtful, and the Muses will hasten to us, will surround us with the sound of their wings, and, perhaps, will place upon our lips one of those combs of honey which rendered Ambrose eloquent, Virgil melodious, and Plato divine.

LXXIV.

A fine quotation is a diamond on the finger of a man of wit, and a pebble in the hand of a fool.

LXXV.

The punishment of licentious writers is that no one will read them or confess to having read them.

LXXVI.

Poetry is truth in its Sunday clothes.

II.

ELOQUENCE, ORATORS.

I.

A PASSABLE definition of eloquence would be, *Anima erumpens.* But how can that be translated into French?

II.

. . . *Habens os rectum et bené sonens.* This definition of the orator in the Scriptures is almost unknown, although it is quite as good as the famous *Vir bonus dicendi peritus.*

III.

To interest the passions, to impassion the interests, behold! this is the aim of eloquence.

IV.

Without eloquence one is not a poet; without poetry one is not an orator.

V.

The word tolerates and knows only the will which masters it, and carries far without peril

only the intelligence which spares the spur and bridle while maintaining its supremacy.

VI.

A good oratorical exercise is to make verses. Thus harmony is acquired, the soul, the number, the body of discourse.

VII.

Let us not judge the eruption by the congealed lava, nor the improvisation by the written page.

VIII.

Who is there who has never been moved even to swooning before speaking in public? It is a profound anguish which invades the flesh, the blood, the mind, and the heart. What can be done to conquer this revolution of the senses, to calm this tumult of the soul? Shall one grow angry, curse one's self, taunt one's self?

My friend, the orator, in this crisis, pray, if you are a priest; if you are not a priest, still pray.

IX.

The grenadiers who took Port-Mahon, when they measured with their eyes on the following day all those thick, lofty walls, bristling with instruments of attack and defence, could not recover their senses at having scaled such ram-

parts and taken possession of such fortifications. Intoxicated with heroism, they had done more than they would have dared to undertake in cold blood. Thus the orator, impelled onward by inspiration, borne upwards by the fever of speech, makes conquests which astonish him afterwards.

X.

There are men to whom the rostrum or the pulpit is a sort of pillory, where they appear riveted, pale, hesitating, confused; such men suffer and cause suffering. There are others who in the rostrum or the pulpit are as if mounted on the tripod, — ardent, transfigured, fascinating. How happy they are to speak! how happy one is to listen to them!"

XI.

The orator, with a glance, measures immense space. . . . Meanwhile, the word neighs and paws in its impatience. "Go!" is said to it at last, and the word, launched at a gallop, shakes the earth, strikes out sparks, devours distances, and triumphs!

XII.

A lecturer of Notre Dame said, "If one wishes to preach well, one must have the devil in one's body." Why did he not add, "And God in the heart"?

XV.

"The cold truth." O preacher of the Word, what are you saying? The truth cold? But the truth is life, fruitfulness, joy, all things that are warm. The truth, which is the word of God himself, is warm, burning, fiery! *Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer.*

XVI.

Demosthenes prepared himself by severe study to become in fact the force of the Athenian people (Δημοῦ Σθένος). His apprenticeship as an orator is legendary, — a subterranean retreat, hair and beard shaved, Thucydides transcribed many times, pebbles placed in his mouth, declamations on the seashore. . . . Tales fabricated, perhaps, but whose harmony and concord bear witness to a precocious energy which was not belied by the future.

In vain are accusations upon accusations launched against this lofty renown; they fall back powerless at his feet. Demosthenes is no longer the name of a man; Demosthenes is the name of eloquence itself.

Was he large or small, homely or handsome? Was he pusillanimous, versatile? The inquiry which was opened centuries ago, has not solved these problems. It matters little. The imagina-

tion persists in representing to itself Demosthenes as great of body and great of heart; one does not admit that this quality of eloquence could have gushed forth from a narrow chest, could have fallen from a sordid soul. The man is to-day unanimously saluted as the equal of the orator.

The discourse Περὶ στεφάνου, read by the jealous Æschines, before the whole school of Rhodes, provoked enthusiasm: —

"What would it be then," exclaimed Æschines, "if you had heard the monster!" Posterity consoles itself for not hearing the monster, by vying with the Rhodians in applauding him.

His relations with Harpalus, the Persian, appeared suspicious. For lack of proof, they were forced to acquit him, if not to absolve him. He is also reproached with the disaster of Cheronea. The duty of the great orator did not extend so far as conquering; he confined himself to convincing the Athenians of the necessity of fighting, and to fighting himself. At the Pnyx, Demosthenes personified the whole of Greece; at Cheronea he was only a soldier.

Moreover, Calaurea found him shortly afterwards, worthy of himself, worthy of Athens. He preferred death to living as the slave of Anti-

pater. . . . This suicide is rightly revolting to our Christian customs.

Let us pity him, but let us not despise him.

As for myself, I admire Demosthenes, who was obedient to his unenlightened conscience, faithful to that which seemed to him to be virtue; just, even to the point of condemning himself to death, scrupulous to the degree of choosing the poison so that he might punish, alas! those too generous lips and too eloquent heart for having involuntarily caused the misfortune of Athens, his well-beloved country.

XVII.

If within thy breast beats a heart warm, loyal, generous, a heroic heart, speak; oh, speak! If not, silence, sounding brass! silence, thou tinkling cymbal!

XVIII.

Onesimus speaks with elegance, a cold elegance. It is icy, and so is his audience also.

XIX.

Ah! how many phrases! Ah! how many ideas!

A single phrase well thought out is worth a whole thousand of these superfluous ideas; a single idea, well developed, is worth a whole thousand of these redundant phrases.

XX.

From the mouth of a Gallic god issued a chain of gold, the symbol of eloquence. Oh! who will find the lost links of that precious chain?

XXI.

Cicero is not exclusively an orator like Demosthenes; he is, besides, a philosopher, a man of letters, etc. I say "besides," and not "in addition," since this diversity of aptitudes added little to his greatness.

Ingenious, elegant, delicate, Cicero is generally lacking in energy, I mean that sovereign energy which characterizes Demosthenes. In Demosthenes, the orator predominates; in Cicero, the lawyer. The one possesses more genius, the other more talent. It seems as though the country spoke with the voice of the Grecian orator. In this he is indeed the "orator." *Orator* signifies deputy, ambassador, delegate of the people. The orator is the mouth (*os*) of a nation. Cicero forgets himself less, keeps himself less in the background. The Republic is of great importance to him, one cannot doubt that; but he does not sufficiently prefer Rome, apparently, to all other things, even to his own glory, nor to all other persons, even himself:

O fortunatam Romam me consule natam !

So much vanity belittles the man, belittles the orator.

In Cicero's day, the toga and the sword disputed Rome, that is to say, the Universe, between them. Victory wavered, at first, between the camps and the rostrums; the rostrums were Cicero, the camps, Octavius. But when the age is not one of virtue or even of law, force finally wins the day against reason, and the sword cuts short speech.

Cicero, weary of anguish and uncertainty, despairing of ever restoring order to the State, wished at least to introduce it into his own conduct; he paid with his life for this noble resolution.

A few days later, he was seen to lean quietly on the edge of his litter, and to offer his head to the emissaries of Antonius, without saying a word, he who had said so much and said it so well.

All the sublime attitudes, all the pathetic phrases of his long oratorical career did not equal the sublimity of this composure, the pathos of this silence.

Augustus one day caught his grandson reading Cicero by stealth: "Read him," said the man who had been Octavius, "read him without fear; he was a great man who loved his country well!"

Shame to the ungrateful triumvir! Respect to the truthful Emperor!

XXII.

It was the custom in Rome, to accompany the exordium of orators with the flute. . . . So should kindness and encouragement always aid those who make their first appearances.

XXIII.

Those who try to speak too well, always have some misgivings as to the manner in which they have spoken.

XXIV.

A man becomes an orator; he is born eloquent.

XXV.

God has given you a beautiful soul, Optimus. Great thoughts flow from your heart as from a spring; your mind is a very harmonious instrument, which every suffering and every joy vies with each other in causing to vibrate. When you speak, your heart is heard to palpitate upon your lips. Your grave, sonorous, penetrating voice agitates like a chant in church; it lingers long in our ear like the murmur of the sea. Never, no, never shall I forget our last conversation. My breast still quivers, my eyelid

is still moist with the emotion which you caused in me. Where do you get this energy, this tenderness, these accents, this color and this perfume? Have you read everything, meditated everything, sounded everything? In the most obscure question, you pierce openings through which the light streams. Profound and subtle, ardent and calm, austere and charming, cold and inspired, you have within you two men who form but one, superior and complete. It is an honor for me to know you, a happiness to see you. O Optimus, may I be not too unworthy to speak before you, to think like you, to listen to you, and to understand you! God loved me on that day when I met you, O Optimus!

XXVI.

A too exact stenography injures a discourse, as a too faithful photograph injures a face. In order that discourses and faces should "appear" beautiful on canvas and on vellum, they must be retouched.

XXVII.

Who is more silent than Timæus before the indifferent? And who more fluent, I will even say more eloquent, than he, when he can pour out his soul freely? Timid because he is gentle, bold because he is strong, he offers the singular spectacle of two contrary characters. The battle

which he will win, frightens him. Strife causes him horror; and yet, what energy, what ardor, what valor, he will display! Arguments throng to his lips. His brow grows lofty; his nostrils dilate; his eyes dart flames; his gesture, always harmonious, accompanies the movements of his thought, the movements of his speech. Who could resist so much force, so much grace? His adversaries, happy at being vanquished, clap their hands. And he — will he take no pride in his victory? Observe him: his air is confused; he has but one fear, that he has caused pain; but one care, to obtain pardon; and he must be comforted.

XXVIII.

A fertile country is worth nothing without fine roads; a great deal of science goes for little without an eloquent tongue.

XXIX.

Is Studio a learned man? I make a distinction. Studio has, to be sure, acquired a certain science; but of profound science, science which is broad and lofty, good and true science, he has none. Studio reads day and night, Studio toils night and day; but all that goes into his head is spoiled there, like a liquid in a wretched cask. A troubled brain, an adulterated judgment, an unlucky memory, — that is Studio.

Add to this, a very heavy tongue, incapable of saying things in a happy manner.

Nevertheless, Studio with difficulty conceals his belief that he is a paragon of eloquence.

XXX.

"Eloquence," replied the ancient orator, "is action, still action, and ever action."

Action! what does that signify?

Did he mean gesture? voice? attitude? bearing? delivery? movement of ideas? the vivacity of the images? the vehemence of the discourse? the combined effect of the proofs? the order of reasoning?

Yes, all this at once.

XXXI.

Hoc quod continet omnia scientiam habet vocis (Eccl.).

In fact, to know how to say a thing is the sum of the whole matter: the word which is language, the language which is intelligence, the created intelligence which is mind, the gift of creative mind which is God.

XXXII.

Judith, before presenting herself before Holofernes, clothed herself in her richest attire, her bracelets, her earrings, her necklets, her rings,

her fillets of purple, her pins of gold. . . In addition to this, *God gave her splendor.*

Thus the orator decks himself in sentiments, thoughts, images, all good things, without doubt, but powerless without the Beautiful, that *splendor* of the True.

XXXIII.

Extemporizers, beware of extemporizing repetitions!

XXXIV.

"A priest should not talk politics in the pulpit." . . . Yes. Only you must not taint everything with politics; otherwise, nothing will be left to say.

XXXV.

When orators and auditors have the same prejudices, those prejudices run a great risk of being made to stand for truths, for incontestable truths.

XXXVI.

Is not an eloquent thing always, more or less, a splendid and sonorous thing?

XXXVII.

Thought causes one to understand, the image makes one see. There will always be more eloquence in the image than in thought.

XXXVIII.

Length of saying makes languor of hearing.

III.

HISTORY, HISTORIANS.

I.

History, if thoroughly comprehended, furnishes something of the experience which a man would acquire who should be a contemporary of all ages and a fellow-citizen of all peoples.

II.

The ancients made of history a panegyric; we have made of it a libel.

III.

The Emperor Augustus, when seated at table between Virgil, who was asthmatic, and Horace, who was blear-eyed, said, laughing, "I am between sighs and tears!"

Alas! who is not seated between these two table-companions at the banquet of life?

IV.

The Greeks said to strangers, "Barbarians!" The strangers retorted, "Children!"

Are not we Frenchmen something of Greeks in Europe?

V.

The Jews, writing to the Spartans, call them brothers. Who are these Spartans? The Lacedemonians, without a doubt. These Lacedemonians, or Laconians, might have descended from one of those tribes who came from Egypt, a country long inhabited by the Hebrews; or from Phœnicia, a country contiguous to the Holy Land.

Apropos of this, might not the Laconian tongue, which differed so widely from the abundance of other dialects, according to the testimony of the Greeks, be a congener or a derivative of Hebrew, — that language which is succinct if ever a language was? Thus, the community of genius would permit us to conjecture a community of origin, and two brother peoples might be recognized by a sister tongue.

Tacitus makes the Jews come from Ida, the island of Crete (*Ida, Idæ, Judæi*). A misapprehension big with mysteries.

VI.

Hannibal: How bold he is, and prompt, and tenacious! Desirous of killing the Roman power, he will not attack it at its extremities, he will strike it full in the heart! With one

bound he crosses rivers like the Ebro and the Rhone, and traverses mountains like the Pyrenees and the Alps. His expedition to Italy is no adventure, but a plan of campaign which he has coldly meditated, and which he will resolutely accomplish. Deprived of troops, deserted by Carthage, he camps for thirteen years in the heart of Italy, as impregnable in defence as he was irresistible in attack. Alone and a stranger, he copes with a whole nation fighting on its own soil. Conquered, he makes his conqueror great without becoming less himself. A fugitive, he raises levies in all the country round about Rome. He is learned, he is witty, he is acute, he is ironical, he is eloquent. His harangue to the senate of Carthage is, perhaps, the most solemn and most pathetic piece which the human tongue has ever uttered. This man weighs down the breast of Rome. Twenty confederated nations would not alarm the Republic like Hannibal alone. If he does not perish, she is not sure of living. Hannibal deigns to die, and Rome utters such a sigh of relief, so great a cry of joy, that the cry and the sigh make the centuries tremble!

VII.

The great historians of Greece and Italy are so many poets.

What is Tacitus? A dramatic poet.

And Titus Livius? An epic poet.

And old Herodotus? A poet, a great poet.

Men and deeds were what they were; they are for us what the historian pleases.

History is a piece played by whom? By dead heroes, who have become, thanks to the writer, living actors. The historian, a poet by virtue of his magic art, transforms his readers into ocular witnesses of the things which he relates.

VIII.

Tacitus is frightful because he is frightened.

IX.

The words of Tacitus seem to have been drawn from Virgil and from Horace; his phrases have the air of disjointed hexameters, *disjecti membra poetæ;* they might be taken for verses intended to be put back into form.

This poetical style, with its solemn but rather stiff, rather monotonous gait, with a supreme but somewhat affected accent, made of Tacitus a writer, and, at the same time — shall I say it? a wicked author.

X.

What is not pardoned to glory? Cæsar drowned the Gauls in blood, and the Gauls loved Cæsar; Napoleon opened all the four veins of France, and the French adored Napoleon!

XI.

Nothing stains and nothing cleanses like blood.

XII.

In order to judge of an event, it is necessary to place one's self at a distance, as it is in order to measure a building.

XIII.

"The philosophy of history! The philosophy of history! . . ." That is the only cry that is audible. It is an abuse. When will it be said, "The theology of history"?

XIV.

The hero arouses wonder, but the man interests.

XV.

Marius was nothing but a brave soldier and a good general. A mediocre politician and a mediocre citizen, he showed little genius and little heart. His few virtues were perhaps vices which had not had time to develop or the occasion to expose themselves. His great science consisted in banishment. Whoever, whether in war or peace, opposed obstacles to him, was an enemy whom he set about destroying. A partisan of Sylla was a Cimbrian in his eyes. He acknowledged only two kinds of men,

friends and enemies. An ambitious egoism was his only conscience, his only rule of conduct. He elevated the vilest who took sides with him; he suppressed the noblest who opposed him. "Rome," "Country," meant nothing to him. To rule, to rule alone, to rule no matter how, to rule before and against all men, that was his passion. Marius was an indefatigable and pitiless sword against the enemies of the Roman name, which cut them down or expelled them; turned against his fellow-citizens, that sword decimated them to such a point that there remained in Rome only a small number of people, who appeared shadows of men and of Romans.

XVI.

Victus, victima; hostis, hostia. . . . These etymologies tell more about the cruel Roman civilization than all the accounts of Titus Livius.

XVII.

Pompey, born a patrician, the man of the aristocracy; Cæsar, also born a patrician, the man of the democracy; Cicero, plebeian by birth, a patrician by education, incessantly between Pompey and Cæsar, while awaiting the hour to founder in the gulf into which the irresolute man, who tries to keep the middle between two contrary currents, rarely fails to fall.

XVIII.

Augustus, the nephew of Julius Cæsar, young, obscure, inexperienced, the heir of a name which condemns him to the empire of the world, systematically cruel, will be the scourge of the universe until the day when he can become its delight.

What matters the way to him? The goal is all. At need, he will exile his friends, he will elevate his adversaries. Like the cork plunged in water, he will strive towards the surface with all his nature. By as much as Octavius was ungrateful, inexorable, vindictive, by so much will Augustus appear full of mildness, I will even say of good nature. Who immolates Cicero, and pardons Cinna? Who covers Italy and the East with corpses, and weeps over the legions of Varus? Who causes the slave to be hung, who was guilty of having eaten a roasted quail, and saves another slave who has just unintentionally broken the crystals of Vedius Pollio? Octavius, Augustus.

Thus ambition defeated renders men ferocious, and, satisfied, persuades them to gentleness. Why did not Octavius possess Rome at his birth? He would, perhaps, have always been Augustus.

XIX.

Polycrates, on finding in the body of a fish the ring which he had flung into the sea, turns pale with fright. Alexander's Philip, on hearing, one after the other, three pieces of good news, implores a reverse. Paulus Emilius wishes to have the coffins of his two dead children accompany him on his triumphal way. . . . Everywhere is distrust of fortune; everywhere a disposition to fear a trap of the perfidious one. . . . There is something more than experience, something more than hearsay, in this; there is an inborn feeling; the memory of some great original misfortune, justly inherited; the unconscious avowal of a disobedience, deserving of chastisement, not of favors. . . . Ausonius profound for this once, ably summed up the spirit of antiquity in this hemistich:—

Fortunam reverenter habe.

XX.

The Roman Empire held its peace before Augustus; one day he wished to impose upon it the article, which is lacking in Latin, and a universal cry arose; Domitian imposed alphabetical reforms by edicts, and there was no one, from consul to lictor, who did not burst with laughter. Chilpéric perpetrated some ortho-

graphical decrees, which aroused more indignation than the abomination of that husband of Frédégonde.

Servility indulges in these unexpected rebellions.

XXI.

Suetonius recoils before no detail; modesty is nothing to him: the truth, whatever it may be, nothing but the truth, the whole truth, naked in history as in the fable! It is not that he is shameless, nor indifferent to good and evil. Many have thought so, and wrongly, as it seems to me. Suetonius always distinguishes between what is virtuous and what is vicious; only he avoids moralizing, and contents himself with exposing the facts, in order that the reader, the sole judge, may pronounce with full knowledge of the case. Hence, no political considerations, no moral reflections.

Suetonius does not relate like Titus Livius, he does not sing like Quintus Curtius, he does not reason like Sallust, he does not moralize like Tacitus; Suetonius reports simply and crudely what he knows through having seen it or learned it. He lacks dash, depth, and scope; still he interests, he instructs, he causes thought. The historian exhibits but little genius, no doubt, but the relater of anecdotes deserves well of posterity.

XXII.

Jeanne d'Arc: She was not suffering from "hallucinations." She was not an "adventuress." Holy voices said to her, "Quit the distaff; take the oriflamme and the lance!" She gives her name, she offers proofs. Nothing astonishes her, neither court, nor camp, nor field of battle. Those who are in command obey her. A cuirass protects her bosom and her heart. Scoffers and impudent men hold their peace; when this young girl passes on horseback, the poor people say, "May God and the good Virgin take pity on the kingdom of France!"

The Englishman envelops her with his hate, the Frenchman with his love. She is the "Saint," she is the "Sorceress." A strange sorceress, in sooth, who delivers her country by the command of God. Once blood tinges her armor; and what blood is it? Her own. Her hand is raised in exhortation, never to slay! She dies as she has lived, like a woman, a hero, a Christian.

An old poet says that she reproduces Hercules in her life and in her death; a rather absurd comparison, but grandiose and striking. Upon the scaffold she weakens, she mourns her pure young life; the fire frightens her: "Mercy!" There is no mercy, and she becomes resigned.

I have seen Jeanne d'Arc in that very Rouen

where she wept because she must die. The statue was heavy and unpleasant, without human expression, without a celestial expression. I saw it with my heart most of all, and I have always shuddered at the memory of it.

The Bishop of Orleans, Alexander Guillemin, and Antoine de Latour have desired for the virgin, for the warrior, for the martyr, yet another glory, — that of the canonized saint. This fourth crown will blossom on her brow when the reign of the sons of Voltaire shall have come to an end.

Stranger lips have vied in chanting the "Good Lorrainese." Bedford and Shakespeare alone, of all England, have dared to hate her; Germany has "filled her hands with lilies," that is to say, with hymns and poems and dramas; France, dishonored blow upon blow by the grotesque Chapelain and the infamous Arouet, owes the homage, doubly expiatory, of an epic to her incomparable child.

XXIII.

The historian must be a poet; not to find, but to find again; not to breathe life into beings, into imaginary deeds, but in order to reanimate and revive that which has been; to represent what time and space have placed at a distance from us.

Scipio Dupleix, Daniel, Rapin-Thoyras, An-

quetil, etc., are bad historians for lack of being poets. Even that which is authentic is not true beneath their pens, and the days of old die over again under their unintelligent hands. Thiers, Lamartine, Michelet, Thierry, etc., know how to vivify; they make one to see, hear, and touch. Not only do they resuscitate, they even create at times; and they divine so well the why and the how of everything, that one can suspect them, like the commentator Brossette, of "knowing Despréaux better than Despréaux knew himself."

XXIV.

Christopher Columbus: Great genius and great heart, equal to his prodigious mission. Always rebuffed, always persevering; everywhere misunderstood, everywhere faithful to himself. Reputed by turns a fool and impious, he protests in the name of reason and of faith. Nothing turns him aside; neither ridicule, nor arguments, nor calumnies, nor the threats which will be realized, nor the promises which will never be realized. Difficulties without, anguish within. A secret voice which says to him, "Courage!" his only support.

Introduced by a monk to the presence of the queen, he explains his project. "A new world? How can it exist? Neither the ancients nor the moderns have ever mentioned it! . . ."

Sadly he takes his departure. Whither will he go? To France, to face more ironies? To England? But Isabella hastens towards him. She pledges her jewels. Oh, noble woman, willed also in the plan of God! . . . Columbus takes to the sea.

What an expedition! Never were the marvellous and the real so well united together! Will he reach the goal? Will that world which he beholds at the bottom of his soul spring up before his eyes? Without doubt that world exists, but will he find it? . . . Oh, sleeplessness! oh, anxiety! oh, toil! He must struggle against everything and everybody: against the elements, against the crew, against the unknown. This fleet bears the fortune of a world.

At length he cries, "Land! land!" He leaps upon the shore; he falls upon his knees; he raises his hands to heaven; his sword remains in its sheath; the standard of the queen of Spain, the cross, the banner of the King of kings, nothing else. And what need of more?

He sails towards Spain; with him envy has embarked, exasperated by so much glory. Ingratitude forces him, as indifference in former days, to wander from city to city alone with his son, whom Lamartine, in an inexcusable fit of abstraction, blasts with the title of bastard. He has given twenty Spains to Spain, and to shelter

himself he has a narrow lodging! He has discovered mines of gold and diamonds, and they haggle with him for a bit of bread!

The history of no people offers a contrast parallel to this. Columbus, at the point of death, possessing no longer anything but a crucifix to remind him of God, and a trophy of chains to remind him of men, bequeathing by will to his poor son, in a poor "posada" of Valladolid, his titles of Viceroy of the Seas and Grand Admiral of the Indies!

If, at least, the world revealed by him bore the name of its discoverer! He had the pain, another has the profit. May God have opened His paradise to the great Christian, who all his life toiled laboriously to spread Jesus Christ and the Church! And, finally, may Rome, the seat of all justice and source of all consolation, place upon the altars the man who aided Peter to accomplish the command of the Gospel: "Go! teach *all* nations!"

XXV.

Danton asks pardon of God and of men for having instituted the Revolutionary Tribunal; Jacques Lafitte asks pardon of God and men for having established the government of July; Jules Favre asks pardon of God and men for having stipulated the non-disarmament of the Parisian militia. . . .

Oh, *shortness* of human wisdom! Oh, folly of pride and vanity! Thus men of the greatest talent, wisdom, and experience fall with both feet and open eyes into the snares foreseen by all, ignored by themselves alone.

XXVI.

Certain names always awaken certain prejudices.

XXVII.

Interests desire order; morals give it.

XXVIII.

Ninety-three! All the monkeys of pagan Rome, whose dream it was to live as Romans of the Republic, could but die as Romans of the Empire; that is to say, violently, at each other's hands.

XXIX.

A historian minister has been caught talking like a historian of lazy kings, with supreme contempt, wishing in his character of minister, that kings should reign and not govern.

XXX.

A variety of bloods is necessary in nations, as well as in families, for the health and well-being of the races.

IV.

MIND, TALENT, CHARACTER.

I.

THE conscience of the man who is given over to his passions is like the voice of the shipwrecked mariner overwhelmed by the tempest.

II.

Memory is an impression which reverberates from time to time in the course of our life.

III.

Sensible men, so long as they have only an experience of intuition and not of manipulation, will not fail to commit follies. They would like to treat the matters of life like matters of the idea. Hence many disappointments. Nevertheless, after a few lessons, they improve.

IV.

The witty man is reputed malicious, and, in general, wrongly. He, malicious? Eh, good heavens! smile at the epigrams which he lets

fly at you, and out of gratitude he will fall upon your neck!

V.

There is no humiliation for humility.

VI.

Imbeciles and malicious people hate witty people. The malicious say that the witty are imbecile, and the imbecile say that the wits are malicious.

VII.

In the matter of praise we consult our appetite more than our health.

VIII.

However much light there may be in a mind, there are always some corners which remain in shadow.

IX.

Epochs of decadence multiply that singular contrast of a fine mind and a vile character.

X.

We love justice greatly, and just men but little.

XI.

There are sterile souls where nothing germinates, neither vices nor virtues.

XII.

The fool never wishes to appear ignorant of what he is being taught, nor to appear not to teach you that which he is ignorant of.

XIII.

The man who abstains on principle from flattering the great soon renders himself suspected in their eyes.

XIV.

Much prudence does not always keep one from committing follies, nor much sense from thinking them, nor much wit from uttering them.

XV.

What is experience? A poor little hut constructed from the ruins of the palace of gold and marble called our illusions.

XVI.

Are the talents which have lost their virginity, and afterwards their force, rare in our epoch?

XVII.

"Buried alive! . . ." What measures are not taken to prevent such a peril? But there are souls which are buried alive, hearts which are

buried alive, minds which are buried alive, and who troubles himself about them?

XVIII.

It is said, "Wit runs the streets." In truth, I have been waiting a long, long time to see it pass by, in order to take off my hat to it. It is as rare in the streets as in the drawing-room.

XIX.

Let us not have our heads in our hearts, nor our hearts in our heads.

XX.

It is hard work to argue with a paltry and supercilious fool in the presence of ignorant people. How are we to set about establishing the rights of reason? Shall we address ourselves to our man's judgment? Our man has no judgment! Shall we appeal to the taste of the audience? The audience is lacking in taste!

XXI.

What is less difficult to awaken than a self-love which has grown drowsy? What more difficult to lull to sleep again than a self-love once awakened?

XXII.

Pride and voluptuousness engender madness.

XXIII.

No labor is hopeless.

XXIV.

There is a frankness which is brutal, and I detest it; a frankness which is indiscreet, and I fear it; a foolish frankness, and I pity it. There is also a frankness which is opportune, delicate, and good; honor to it!

XXV.

We are more conscious that a person is in the wrong when the wrong concerns ourselves.

XXVI.

Happy the man who mortifies the bitter pleasure of crying out at everything which wounds or oppresses. He will live in peace with others and with himself.

XXVII.

Ah! how much alone is a virtuous man!

XXVIII.

Our experience is composed rather of illusions lost than of wisdom acquired.

XXIX.

I call a certain generative faculty "genius." (*Genius, generare.*)

XXX.

"How is he?" "Ill, very ill." "But the doctor has just told me that he passed a good night, and that perhaps. . . ." "The doctor is mistaken." "But who assures you? . . ." "I know by a certain sign that he is lost: Vécors is mourning aloud, Vécors his favorite, his creature, — and that ever since yesterday!"

XXXI.

A king, surrounded by his court, was seated beside the highway. Savoir-faire came along. "Who are you?" asked the king. Savoir-faire replied, "I am not much of anything. If you think good, I can be a great deal. Say the word, and I shall have talent, wisdom, power, all that I desire to make myself agreeable to you." — "Remain," said the king.

Then Knowledge (*Savoir*) passes. The king in his abstraction did not perceive him. "King, Knowledge!" cried a courtier. Knowledge, with a humble mien and trembling lip, approaches. "Sire, my words are straightforward, my heart is true, my hand is just. Take me into your employ: I shall be of service to you."

The king replied, "Away, proud creature!"

XXXII.

Our character often makes our conscience.

XXXIII.

He: "I have been owing you for more than a year; I wish to pay my debt.... What is it?"

The workman: "Twenty-five francs, sir."

He: "Twenty-five francs? Oh! Oh!... Let it go at twenty francs."

The workman: "My account is just, sir! Merchandise is dear, work is at a standstill, and workmen are scarce, so scarce!..."

He: "I have said twenty, and I stick to that."

The workman: "I am sorry..."

He: "It is an insult! My friends shall know about you!" (He opens his purse.)

A beggar (half opening the door): "Charity, gentlemen!"

He: "Capital!... It shall not be said that I have the shame and you the profit (tossing a Louis d'or to the workman and a five-franc piece to the beggar). "Take that, and begone."

The beggar: "Five francs! Oh, the good man!"

XXXIV.

Salt sprinkled on the earth renders it sterile; mixed with the soil, it renders it fruitful.

XXXV.

Experience teaches the good that there are wicked people, and the wicked that there are good people.

XXXVI.

"Every sincere opinion is worthy of respect." ... I make a distinction: the sincerity is a thing worthy of respect. The opinion ... if it is virtuous, yes; if not, no.

XXXVII.

Our judgments are inspired by our acts more than our acts by our judgment.

XXXVIII.

How many sacrifice honor, a necessity, to glory, a luxury!

XXXIX.

People who are calumniated are like fruits. They are bitten; therefore they are good.

XL.

Imitation is a necessity of nature; when young, we imitate others; when old, ourselves.

XLI.

The good hate evil, but not evil people; the evil abhor both good and good people.

XLII.

Yesterday I plucked up some plants and flung them on the dung-heap.... I found them this morning blossoming and smiling.

Thus do beautiful souls flourish under humiliation.

XLIII.

The foolhardy man prevails there and now; the prudent man in the long run and everywhere.

XLIV.

This lower world must be traversed as shipwrecked mariners traverse the sea, with head above the billows, eye and arms towards the shore.

XLV.

An undisputed merit finds no great difficulty in appearing modest.

XLVI.

Success causes us to be more praised than known.

XLVII.

The cause of good has against it both the vicious who combat it, and the just who defend it badly or not at all.

XLVIII.

You have talent? Possibly! But do you make the most of it? That is to say, do you exert yourself, more or less, according to times, places, and people? If you simply intend, but

do not exert yourself, your talent will probably profit no one, and it certainly will not profit you.

XLIX.

"The air which the body can breathe does not extend very high," say the physicists. . . .

The air which the soul can breathe here below is still less abundant.

L.

If a great personage of lowly birth commits a base action, "He forgets himself," more than one will say. Eh! no, he recollects himself!

LI.

"Simple, innocent, candid, naïf." These words take a sense which make one smile in exact proportion as public morals take a turn which makes one weep.

LII.

The subtle mind excels in giving reasons for a thing; the penetrating mind, in finding their reasons.

LIII.

Our soul, which the world pretends to divert with its vanities, resembles the child which is consoled by the offer of a rattle in lieu of a star.

LIV.

Is it you who are barking so, Molossus? What has been done to you? You fly into a fury at everything, at the wind, the rain, the sun. . . . Your tongue is a lash which is always raised, always resounding. May the saints of paradise preserve me from your wrath! It bursts forth more quickly than the thunder, more abundantly than the storm, more impetuously than the hurricane. It shakes, it twists, it uproots, it carries away, it disperses! The less cause it has, the more effect does it produce. In truth, you are no longer a reasonable being, you are an element. You have no regard for any one, you respect nothing. You set out; your gallop is accelerated by the speed acquired; and you strike blindly, cut and thrust, to right, to left, above, below, far and near, at random! Who could flatter himself at finding mercy before you, implacable man? You want all to hold the same reason, your own; you want all to have the same character, the same sentiments, your own, always your own. Woe to him who opposes you with an *if*, a *but*, a smile, a gesture, a silence! You sacrifice him on the instant to the Furies. Thus your aspect terrifies, Molossus. Mothers flee in desperation, on perceiving your approach; and little children

take flight, in terror amid tears and cries of "the bugaboo! . . ."

LV.

Who suffers more, the capable man who is at the bottom and who should be at the top, or the mediocre man who is at the top and ought to be at the bottom?

LVI.

It is not as far from the heart to the mouth, as it is from the mouth to the hand.

LVII.

We all boast of something: one of his ancestors, another of his alliances, one of his face, another of his mind, another of his heart, one of his hopes, one of his disappointments, one of his fortune, another of his poverty, one of his virtues, another of his vices. . . . That man who boasts of not boasting is not the one who boasts the least.

LVIII.

The violet beneath the grass, the nightingale amid the foliage, the genius who has patience, the virtue which hides itself, — these are four charming things.

LIX.

What virtue is not indispensable to the witty man, to enable him to deny himself the pleasure

of a malicious hit? Jean Racine, at the moment of his greatest fervor, bit his lips until they bled, in order to restrain a sally.

LX.

Genius makes its way with so much difficulty, because this lower world is in the hands of two omnipotences, — that of the wicked, and that of the fools.

LXI.

What is a virtuous man? Some one who possesses a perfect whole of religious, social, and domestic virtues, perfumed with delicacy.

LXII.

Our sentiments, our thoughts, our words, lose their rectitude on entering certain minds, just as sticks plunged in the water look bent.

LXIII.

We amend our defects less than our good qualities.

LXIV.

The irresolute man blesses the necessity which will absolve him from taking any side whatever.

LXV.

If you have neither virtues nor vices, rejoice; you will be called good: if you lack wit and

imagination, be comforted; you will be considered sensible and "practical."

LXVI.

That which puts the last touch to the perversion of the wicked man, finishes the conversion of the good one.

LXVII.

What is slander? A verdict of "guilty" pronounced in the absence of the accused, with closed doors, without defence or appeal, by an interested and prejudiced judge.

LXVIII.

All which bars his road gives way, willingly or unwillingly, before the man of talent who no longer goes alone.

LXIX.

We thrive on evil for a time, in order that it may the more surely ruin us in the end.

LXX.

This man has his defects; yet he cherishes truth and defends justice. And petty souls exclaim: "Oh, the inconsistency! Oh, the scandal!..." But pious hearts say: "Oh, the native nobility of the man! oh, the happy contradiction of the Christian!"

LXXI.

The wicked man has two ways of injuring, — by doing good, and by doing evil.

LXXII.

When the tongue puts itself at ease, it puts everything else under constraint.

LXXIII.

A multitude of things awake in us at first sight a sensation which seems to be memory.

LXXIV.

Very few men are capable of judging. "The general opinion" is often merely the opinion of a few accepted by all.

LXXV.

A tree with lofty head has less shade at its foot.

LXXVI.

Too many social or literary conventionalities prevent one's being "one's self," either as a citizen or as a writer.

LXXVII.

A man makes his way better with agreeability without merit, than with merit without agreeability.

LXXVIII.

Fortuna had, formerly, only the meaning of luck, chance, opportunity; to these we have added the meaning, riches; "to possess a great fortune. . . ." *Facultates* signified "pecuniary resources," alone; it no longer designates anything but the "powers" of the mind. Nevertheless, the expression is good, "To give according to one's powers."

LXXIX.

The world constitutes itself the judge and the executioner of whomsoever sacrifices his conscience to it.

LXXX.

Conscientious men are, almost everywhere, less encouraged than tolerated.

LXXXI.

One sort of humility springs from pride; one sort of pride springs from humility.

LXXXII.

He who says, "I have done wrong," however wicked he may be, could be more so.

LXXXIII.

How many are there who do not sin from lack of desire or lack of occasion?

LXXXIV.

The folly which we might have ourselves committed is the one which we are least ready to pardon in another.

LXXXV.

The man of talent who is born poor, can neither take care of himself, look out for himself, nor place himself where, when, and as he should. Daily bread solicits his attention first of all, and holds him captive from the beginning. He cannot live according to his mind, except at "leisure" hours, by hiding himself, and compromising himself. Possessing neither complete liberty, complete independence, complete ease, nor complete respect, he runs a great risk, if he arrives at the goal at all, of arriving old and way-worn.

LXXXVI.

When those who can and ought to do us good content themselves with paying us off in sonorous compliments, let us console ourselves with the thought that we are superior to them by the whole depth of their baseness.

LXXXVII.

A whole heaven is contained in a drop of dew, a whole soul within a tear.

LXXXVIII.

It is a very rare thing for a man of talent to succeed by his talent.

LXXXIX.

We are never well served except by that which we support well.

XC.

Dignities are fruitful; dignity, alas! is sterile.

XCI.

The lion in his cage must have his bow-wows, and the despot in his palace, his fussy little minds and flatterers.

XCII.

The same clouds which grew thick and dark to prevent the sun from shining, clothe themselves in suppleness and transparency when the sun has forced them to make way for him.

XCIII.

There is a slowness in affairs which ripens them, and a slowness which rots them.

XCIV.

The philosopher spends in becoming a man the time which the ambitious man spends in becoming a personage.

XCV.

Reason! reason! . . . As much as you like; but beware of thinking that it answers to everything, suffices for everything, satisfies everything. This mother loses her child: will reason comfort her? Does cool reason counsel the inspired poet, the heroic warrior, the lover? Reason guides but a small part of man, and that the least interesting. The rest obeys feeling, true or false, and passion, good or bad.

XCVI.

Satan, having one day convoked his grand council, the ministers of hell, when on the point of taking their places debated the question of precedence.

"The place on my right to the most worthy!" exclaimed Satan.

Lust pleaded his right; Falsehood asserted his title; Pride vaunted his merits.

Satan listened in indecision.

Sarcasm gave vent to a grin, and said: "No one is more worthy than I, Satan. The evil which these do is little compared with what I know how to effect. One can correct himself of all of them, but one can never free himself from me: they ruin individuals, I destroy empires; they encourage vice, I discourage virtue.

Through me, enthusiasm expires, justice succumbs, truth becomes afraid, duty ashamed. *Derisor perdet civitatem. . . .*"

"Come, seat thyself beside me!" said Satan.

XCVII.

On earth we obtain nothing without effort; how, without virtue, shall we attain glory in heaven?

XCVIII.

Reason is habitual, secondary inspiration; inspiration is superior, intermittent reason.

XCIX.

Like those statues which must be made larger than "nature" in order that, viewed from below, or from a distance, they may appear to be of the "natural" size, certain truths must be "strained" in order that the public may form a just idea of them.

C.

What is a day without sun, or a man without goodness?

CI.

Ah! how little we know those who know us best.

CII.

A brain without judgment is like a carriage badly hung, which upsets on the way.

CIII.

Pervicax has been studying, observing, writing these thirty years to no purpose. With the exception of two or three who suspect his worth and hold their peace, no one takes Pervicax seriously. "But if he possessed merit, the masters would salute him in the sight of all! . . ."

But behold homage comes from above and afar to seek Pervicax in the depths of his isolation.

"Really? . . . Such a surprise! . . . The man has talent, it must be confessed. . . ."

And in one day Pervicax becomes a prophet; a prophet in his own country! He is surrounded, admired, glorified. Some pamphlet which he published fifteen years ago amid universal indifference is lauded; some college composition in which his genius began to dawn is exhumed; his latest work is placed upon the table by itself, with a paper-knife between the leaves; "it will be read page by page with delight, as it deserves; his ideas, his style, are charming! . . ." Thus Pervicax enters upon his triumphal path. The time for the shrugging of shoulders, for sly looks and heart-rending smiles is past. Everything has changed its aspect, and the stones which were hurled at him must now be placed in orderly fashion, and

a pedestal must be constructed of them for the statue which is being prepared for him.

CIV.

Generosity is more charitable than wealth.

CV.

In a brilliant position a piece of folly speedily creates a sensation.

CVI.

Let those talk who assert that in order to speak with knowledge of a passion of the heart, it is necessary to have shared it. O, thou who art chaste, remain chaste. Study vice outside thyself; it is enough. Do not become impure in order to know. To graft good upon evil is divine; to graft evil upon good would be Satanic. Teach us by experience, O, converted libertine, what a misery sin is; thou canst do it, and it is thy duty. And you, snow without a spot, sweet-scented lily, if you renounce your whiteness, what will you be good for? To enlarge the dung-heap in the corner.

CVII.

All has not been discovered in the firmament of *ideas*. The sons of Galileo and Herschel every year point out some planet unknown in this quarter of the universe; why should not the disciples of Descartes and Leibnitz find in

some corner of the brain, in some fold of the heart, a star, very ancient, since it would date from God; and very new, since it has beamed upon our horizon only yesterday?

Silence, philosopher; priest, resignation.

CVIII.

Repress a certain disposition to treat as enemies those who do not believe, pray, think, act, nor speak as thou dost.

CIX.

It is impossible to be just if one is not generous.

CX.

The *Revolutions of Sweden* made a great noise at their birth. The Swedish ambassador was ordered to offer the author a pension and the cross. "The Abbé Vertot?" he inquired at the court of Versailles. "Not known here." "The Abbé Vertot?" he asked of the Academy; the same reply. He seeks the editor: "Can you tell me where the Abbé Vertot lives?" "In a village between Paris and Melum." "With whom?" "At home, in the parsonage. The Abbé Vertot is a simple country curé." "Ho! that makes a difference!" And the ambassador pocketed the purse and the decoration.

Only those who have, receive.

V.

JOY, SUFFERING, FORTUNE.

I.

WHAT prince of Europe or of Asia, seeking throughout the whole of his vast empire for a happy man, found him at last in the skin of a poor wretch who had no shirt? Felicissimus has a shirt, and more, thank God, but in spite of that, Felicissimus is certainly the happiest man beneath the canopy of heaven. Listen to him, look at him, apropos of everything, not to say of nothing. Joy beams from his eyes, overflows from his lips, wells up from his heart to gush forth far and near, all around him. Every one honors him, distinguishes him, is his friend. The slightest word, the slightest piece of politeness, covers him with glory. A mere nothing becomes gold by passing through his mouth. The entire universe gravitates towards him and revolves about him. "I have just dined with my friend, the ambassador; I have received a visit from my comrade Z, . . . the deputy; the poet X . . . wishes to render homage to me in a

poem he is composing, etc." There is no great personage who does not seek him, who does not consult him. . . . If Felicissimus has a regret (which takes nothing from his beatitude), it is that he is not able to multiply himself, to suffice for the love of all. Life, for him, is a perpetual banquet, where he is suffocated under roses.

Let us not be jealous of Felicissimus; let us rather admire him, since he does not wish to be pitied.

II.

Nothing vivifies, and nothing kills, like the emotions.

III.

Great joys weep, great sorrows laugh.

IV.

Present unhappiness is selfish; past sorrow is compassionate.

V.

Let us prefer, let us not exclude.

VI.

A certain sadness constitutes a refinement of pleasure, which is peculiar to pride.

VII.

The passions have a certain something, I know not what, about them, which always tempts, and which never contents.

VIII.

At first we hope too much, later on, not enough.

IX.

Hope deceives, enjoyment undeceives.

X.

One day everything breaks and crumbles, another day everything rises again.

XI.

Few know how to suffer, from lack of heart; or how to enjoy, for lack of mind.

XII.

Press anything you will, a groan will issue forth.

XIII.

Trees assume, on the approach of winter, an air of anguish, an accent of desolation which are thrilling. One would say that all these leaves were struggling before they fall and die.

XIV.

Many conditions are necessary for happiness, which are rarely encountered together.

XV.

He who does not appreciate does not possess.

XVI.

We shall know whether we have been happy, we do not know if we are so.

XVII.

"I was ignorant, I was happy!" . . . all proud spirits, anxious to ignore, more anxious to know, breathe forth this cry of pain, since Adam, the first who desired and the first who was deceived.

XVIII.

Does he desire a thing? It is with all his heart. Neither appetite nor sleep will divert him from it. . . . Frustrated, he is disenchanted. The news of a success long waited for in vain, finds him indifferent. In everything, spontaneity, opportuneness, alone are sweet to him.

XIX.

We abandon ourselves to revery, before our eyes first flit fantastic forms. We almost see them; they seem to have a body; they turn, they withdraw, they return, like the butterflies which play about a lamp; they caress our imagination with the tip of their wing. Little by little our fancy strays among the folds of a confused and fluttering veil. Our eyes dilate and become fixed, gazing but seeing nothing. . . .

Let some one come, we start up as though awakened from the midst of a dream.

XX.

There are days when we permit ourselves to be invaded by great waves of sadness. Our mind becomes cast down, our will succumbs, our soul leaves us. We think we are no longer free. Our energy seems fettered hand and foot. We have no longer either force or desire to do anything. We regard ourselves with amazement, sometimes with pity. Happy are we if tears come to our aid! . . . But this arid and silent malady dries the eyelids after having dried up the heart. Body and soul become susceptible to the highest degree; the light pains us, we seek the shadow; the human voice wearies us, we bury ourselves in silence; social life is a burden, we embrace solitude; we live with difficulty, as a wicked man lives with his remorse. We eat our hearts out at pleasure. . . . Terrible trial! What poison can be compared to that virus which chills and consumes; which paralyzes, pulverizes, and dissolves; which dissuades us from virtue, and disgusts us with generosity; which renders us enemies of ourselves and of every one else.

We detach ourselves from what we love the most, willingly, coldly, obstinately. We display

lamentable ingenuity in destroying our own happiness of memory or hope. Every sweet word returns to us like a bitter after-taste; all devoted service, every flattering distinction, every delicate attention produces upon us the effect of an irony.

We bear our torture about with us, and when it is necessary to smile, the lips assume sinister folds. . . . And we exaggerate this evil which is already so great, with a cruel pleasure. If such a disorder were lasting! woe, ah! yes, woe to us! but God at whom we are sulking (for this strange nightmare sets us against God also), does not hold us sternly to our proud infirmity; and in order to snatch us from the peril, he sends us either an all-powerful consolation or a real sorrow.

XXI.

Pleasure once tasted satisfies less than the desire experienced for it torments.

XXII.

Say nothing good of yourself, you will be distrusted; say nothing bad of yourself, you will be taken at your word.

XXIII.

Those men whose backs are so elastic in bending before you, in the hour of your pros-

perity, will find them just as elastic for straightening up against you in the day of your adversity.

XXIV.

Since unhappiness excites interest, many, in order to render themselves interesting, feign unhappiness.

XXV.

The chief cause of our misery is less the violence of our passions than the feebleness of our virtues.

XXVI.

We often experience more regret over the part we have left, than pleasure over the part we have preferred.

XXVII.

All moralists have discerned a mysterious connection between pride, that voluptuousness of the spirit, and voluptuousness, that pride of the flesh.

XXVIII.

The same vanity causes us to announce ourselves as new as to mind and ideas, and ancient as to descent and nobility.

XXIX.

Great dejection often follows great enthusiasm.

XXX.

The imagination passes over pleasure, but not over suffering.

XXXI.

Long-continued happiness seems to require an excuse, and long-continued unhappiness, pardon.

XXXII.

One grain of sand, which would not check a torrent, holds in check the sea.

XXXIII.

When unhappy, one doubts everything; when happy, one doubts nothing.

XXXIV.

Our folly does not fail to seek happiness where even our reason knows well that it is not to be found.

XXXV.

At one time everything succeeds with us, though we heap faults upon faults; at another time we might perform wonders, and nothing succeeds according to our wish.

XXXVI.

Whoever does not recognize himself in good fortune, will recognize himself just to that degree in misfortune.

XXXVII.

The happiness which is lacking makes one think even the happiness one has unbearable.

XXXVIII.

I look at what I have not, and think myself unhappy; others look at what I have, and think me happy.

XXXIX.

If you feel happy to the point of saying so, listen! unhappiness is at your door.

XL.

Man is not made for joy, and he becomes habituated to joy to the point of satiety; man is made for pain, and he resists pain to the point of despair: a double mystery!

XLI.

Success shows off our good qualities; lack of success shows off our defects.

XLII.

Merit passes current, — but as contraband.

XLIII.

We are deceived both by our hopes and by our fears.

XLIV.

Delicate souls seem more at their ease in delicate bodies.

XLV.

Evil often triumphs, but never conquers.

XLVI.

"I thought him faithful. . . . He has deceived me!" To say, "I deceived myself," would be more just.

XLVII.

At the bottom of every man there is an abyss which hope, joy, ambition, hate, love, the sweetness of thinking, the pleasure of writing, the pride of conquest, cannot fill. The whole world cast into that abyss would not satisfy it; but, oh my God! a drop, one single drop of your grace, causes it to overflow. It is you who are the principle of real joy. Without you one laughs, but one says at that laugh, "Why dost thou deceive me?" That laugh is harsh, like a note which offends the laws of harmony; cold, like those waters which never reflect the sun.

XLVIII.

The same desire which, planted on earth, will produce the flowers of a day, sown in heaven, will bear the fruits of eternity.

XLIX.

The heart which has wept much resembles the rock of Horeb, which is now dry, but preserves the mark of the waters which gushed from it in days of yore.

L.

Everything that is exquisite hides itself.

LI.

There are in this world beings who are not of this world. The public (for a long time the expression ran — the vulgar herd), when it beholds them pass, judges them to be haughty, eccentric, insane.... Ah! if the public could see them feel, think, suffer! Then it would account them as more of men than other men.

LII.

Pleasure attracts — like a void.

LIII.

That which deceives us and does us harm, also undeceives us and does us good.

LIV.

Socrates asked that he might be lodged and fed at the expense of the Republic in the Prytaneum of Athens; he obtained a prison and hem-

lock. — Merit is conscious of itself; at need, it puts forth its claims. . . . Happy is it if its demand is merely refused! . . .

LV.

In youth one has tears without grief: in age, griefs without tears.

LVI.

Lofty mountains are full of springs; great hearts are full of tears.

LVII.

Who resists the pleasure of preaching to a priest?

LVIII.

Let us correct the habit of believing in men, and of placing our hopes on them; let us not correct ourselves of the habit of loving them.

LIX.

Natural philosophers say, "This drop of water contains worlds of vibrii, volvoces, elminthæ, and animalculæ of all sorts." And we marvel. Who will tell (a nomenclature no less interesting) the myriads of thoughts and feelings contained in one tear which has fallen from the heart?

LX.

Solitude vivifies; isolation kills.

VI.

TIME, LIFE, DEATH, THE FUTURE.

I.

CICERO asserts that the noises of earth prevent men from hearing the harmony of the stars as they roll through the ether.

In the same way, the tumult of the century and the bustle of life render the soul deaf to the mysterious voices which summon him on high.

II.

The future, the future, to what can I compare the future?

A strange flame flies through the shadow. And in order to seize it, you run, — you run to seize the wandering light. . . . Courage! you will overtake it. . . . You have reached it! Alas! the brightness disperses, and a precipice engulfs you! Image of the future.

The future, the future, to what can I compare the future?

You have been told of the mirage which spreads over the horizon of the desert. The

pilgrim, hoping for a soft couch amid the verdant grass, and fresh water from the sparkling lake, hastens onward. Transported with joy, he stretches out his hands, he utters a cry. . . . Alas! the mirage has vanished! Image of the future.

The future, the future, to what can I compare the future?

When you were a child, it sometimes happened to you that you possessed handfuls of gold-pieces in your dreams. You said to yourself: "How shall I spend this fortune? I will buy this and that. . . ." Illusion! The day breaks, there is no more treasure! Image of the future.

A man ransacks the great sea, seeking for pearls: "Surely, I shall have a happy old age!" He speaks and dives, and dives again, and goes on diving! Horrors! when he rose he was a corpse! Image of the future.

Yes, the future lures us on, bears us away, and ruins us. I speak of that future towards which men direct their gaze. Another future, very faithful, very true, is the future in the skies. That never deceives. When shall we pursue it, — it alone?

III.

Man, finding himself miserable, comforts himself with the thought that the past, which he has

not seen, was worth more than the present, — that present which is obvious to him with all its vices unsoftened by distance.

IV.

"Oh, cruel death!" . . . This, if I mistake not, is a pagan phrase. Death is not cruel, but just and severe: just as the sentence, severe as the punishment.

V.

To live, to outlive, to live again, should be the whole of man.

VI.

Life is a stream upon which drift flowers in spring, and blocks of ice in winter.

VII.

Strange is life, into which we enter weeping, through which we weeping pass, and out of which we go still weeping.

VIII.

"Time restores all things." Wrong! Time restores many things, but eternity alone restores all.

IX.

The time comes when one feels the need of the slumber of death, as, at the end of a toilsome day, one feels the need of another sleep.

X.

All that passes gives rise to reflection.

XI.

A little more and I should have crushed this worm which must devour me to-morrow.

XII.

Man is a braggart! "I am killing time," he says, and it is time which is killing him.

XIII.

Ah! how quickly time passes! and time is our life, it is ourselves here below. Life seems interminable when one surveys it from the end at which it begins; but the other end makes haste and approaches apace. In vain do we leap to right and left, to retard its entrance; naught avails.

XIV.

That which we have the most desired is that which will chastise us best.

XV.

Born in the crowd, Calixtus now rules. His equals of yesterday obey him to-day. Will he, the man of genius, who has happily succeeded, remember amid his lofty fortune, the humble

and obscure, encumbered with their unrecognized talent? Will he rise to go and take them from the rabble rout where they are in danger of suffocation? Will he incline graciously towards them? Will he direct a glance towards them? Will he send them a word? Will he reach out his hand to them to separate them from the vulgar herd, to raise them above the multitude, to make them manifest to themselves, to himself, to all? Calixtus cannot; Calixtus will not. The great Calixtus loves only fools.

XVI.

He compares himself to the guest, who, weary of eating in emptiness and digesting in imagination, takes it ill that he should be summoned at last to seat himself at table at the hour of betaking himself to sleep.

It is because he is, above all, delicate,—I mean delicate in character. A morsel of dry bread pleases him better than a dainty dish obtained by a mean action. That which predominates in him is the head and the heart. The disinterestedness of which he has furnished more than one example, has won him the peculiar renown of not being a practical man, of living in the clouds, like a poet as he is. It is not denied that he knows how to think, to write, to speak; all admit that he is a master on these points.

As for other things, he passes for being unsuited to them; this makes him so difficult to place, that he is no longer thought of, if he was formerly thought of at times. An employment for him! a title! a dignity! . . . In the first place, he has not asked, and in the next place, what if he were to refuse! . . .

XVII.

A blade of grass which has sprung up amid the sand, bends towards the brook; and each wave, as it passes, shakes the blade of grass, which falls, and rises to fall once more. . . .

This blade of grass is man, who is tossed about by the billows of life, and who is, in turn, bowed down by trials, and raised again by hope.

The blade of grass yields little by little to the wave, falling each time lower, rising each time less high. The wave draws it, tears it up at last, and bears it away.

Thus man, that blade of grass, toils wearily until he succumbs. That rapid water, which is called time, tosses him about, uproots him, and hurries him on towards the ocean of eternity.

XVIII.

Lack of credit is worse than lack of money. "The loss of money is not deadly," says the

proverb. Money can be replaced. But what can replace credit and honor?

XIX.

A man who is not in his place is like a dislocated bone; he suffers and he causes suffering.

XX.

Man made anew by Christ, in his image and in his likeness; man raised anew, and yet anew by grace; man educated and completed by faith, *ecce homo!* this is *man*, man such as he should be, the true man, the man of Christ, the Christian.

XXI.

Some certain period of your life, which was so cruel to traverse, will, perhaps, one day merit your regrets; and, perhaps, at the present moment you may, without knowing it, be finishing your share of terrestrial happiness.

XXII.

Happiness comes only from one quarter, unhappiness comes from all quarters.

XXIII.

Life is passed in desiring what one has not, in regretting what one has no longer.

XXIV.

Death, indifferent apparently, by dint of being impartial, spares no one; and those who depart warn us that we must depart also. That which saddens the heart instructs the spirit.

XXV.

Ah! how happy must they feel who die, even amid their regret for the earth, at meeting once more, there on high, those of their family who have preceded them! Here we part; in heaven we shall find each other again.

VII.

THE FAMILY, CHILDHOOD, OLD AGE.

I.

We know only how to repeat, "There are no longer any children." But parents — are there still any of them?

II.

A child should be early furnished with the greatest possible sum of ideas, of healthy, broad, and grand ideas. Man only likes to learn what he knows. Now, if he is not forewarned in time of what is just, beautiful, and good, he runs the risk of spurning the just, later on, as false, the beautiful as ugly, the good as bad; and it will be so much the worse for him; and, above all, so much the worse for society.

III.

I. His son leaves him, his only son, the son of his old age, his well-beloved son. And the

young man smiles through his tears, he smiles in order to deceive his mother, whose heart trembles, — he, whose heart is trembling too. Poor son!

II. Time passed more swiftly in former days! A letter? Oh, joy! What does he say? What is he doing? . . . He loves you, he says that he loves you? . . . A letter is very sweet, but an absent son is something cruel! . . . Mother of Jesus, who lost your child twice for three days, give me back my son! . . . Poor Mother!

III. After seven years (a century), this son returns. It is he! She kisses him a hundred times in one, and she lifts him up, as she presses him to her bosom! . . . Relations, neighbors, friends, troop in: "You beheld my pain, now share my pleasure!" The table is laid. They eat, they drink, they sing, — "To thy health, mother!" . . . The unfortunate woman tries to answer, stammers, bends over her child, and expires! Poor mother! poor son! . . .

IV. Too much joy after too much pain brings death.

IV.

"That old man! . . . That young man! . . ." So age is an evil, an evil which depends upon man, since he is reproached with it on every occasion!

V.

Women must endure as much as possible; man must make himself endured as little as possible.

VI.

THE MOTHER: Grieve not, my son, because thou art a child. Age hastens on, too, and time bears us away fast enough, without being urged by the spur. Keep thy ignorant joy. Days will come full of bitterness and anguish. Then the burden of life will multiply on thy head, thou wilt walk with bended back and bruised heart. Thou art in thy springtime: then blossom, sing, and smile while awaiting the sharp and gloomy winter.

THE FATHER: Life is a stern and manly thing, my son. Have a care that thou become a man speedily. Thy soul is small, increase it; thy heart is frail, strengthen it. Command thy feet to be energetic, thy hands to be robust, thy breast to be proud and persevering. Every road groans. Happy is he who never succumbs, or who, having succumbed, rises again! Prepare to pay the tribute of sweat and tears, owed by every traveller upon earth.

THE CHILD: Joy, sadness, confident tranquility, uneasy foresight, . . . which shall I choose? Must I abandon myself to present delights, or

anticipate future trials? What is life? All pleasure? all pain? . . . I shall only know the taste of that vase of mystery after I shall have drunk it to the dregs.

VII.

Education, properly understood, is that which teaches discernment, in order that one may love or hate that which is really loveworthy or hateful.

VIII.

A child is told, — "Love this person: hate that one:" and the child, who has confidence in the command, cherishes the one and detests the other.

Many great persons are children in this respect, loving or hating on the word of others.

IX.

Does instruction render good natures better, as frequently as it renders bad natures worse? . . .

X.

Childhood is subject to slumber so profound that the sense of time and place is lost: — What day is to-day? . . . Where am I? . . . are the cries on waking.

XI.

The memory of certain dreams survives childhood.... "Have I seen that or dreamed it?..." one asks one's self, at long intervals in the course of one's life.

VIII.

THE COUNTRY, THE PEASANT.

I.

THE people of Tulle call our peasants *peccata.* This nickname contains an admirable meaning. The peasant is, indeed, sin, original sin, still persistent and visible, in all its brutal simplicity, in all its simple *brutishness.*

II.

The peasant loves nothing and nobody except for the use he can make of him.

III.

If you do good to a peasant, he will not love you, perhaps: do evil to him and he will certainly fear you.

IV.

All that any peasant requires, to become a great saint, is to be supernaturally that which he is naturally, — laborious, sober, patient, resigned. . . .

V.

The peasant who does not come to us from necessity, believes himself to be necessary, and assumes importance as soon as we go to him out of charity.

VI.

The peasant is a deist; beyond that he heeds nothing that is said or done.

VII.

"Does one ever know of whom or of what one may have need?" That, in brief, is the peasant's preoccupation, his criterion, his spring of action.

VIII.

The peasant is a sullen payer, like the soil which he tills.

IX.

Creation has no animal more sober than the peasant in his own house, less sober than the peasant in other people's houses.

X.

The peasant does not so much deprive himself of enjoyment as he enjoys the act of depriving himself.

XI.

Was there ever a peasant-patriarch?

XII.

The peasant admits that the most petty employee in the town is greater than he.

XIII.

The earth, mellowed by a recent rain, shines in the sun, as fat and brown as a honey cake.

The man, goad in hand, weighs down the heavy plough which two cows draw with difficulty.

The team, it seems, never goes as it should.

And the man harshly reproves, reproaches, appeals to the poor beasts.

"Ha! Rousselle! Ha! Fromente! ha, there!"

But Fromente and Rousselle, no longer knowing what they are about, trace the furrow awry: and the man, more provoked than ever, speaks sharply to them, strikes them, and blasphemes!

The cows utter a long low of distress; it is useless, they will not stir. He must unharness them. . . .

No sooner are they unbound than they set out for home at a gallop, gloomy, wild, agitated as at the approach of a storm. . . .

A fellow-laborer with God, he has blasphemed.

XIV.

They were married young ; he seemed a child, she a little sister. Acquaintance produces disgust, — often, not always. Witness this couple, who were more loving every morning than the day before.

The most fragile thing is not love ; it is life....

She died.... He could not die, but he ceased to live.

Oh, lost happiness ! Oh, faithful love !

As his face grew ever paler, some said : "It is the effect of the black : his color will come back when he leaves off mourning. . . ."

He no longer cared for anything. Work, appetite, sleep, farewell ! Oh, how lonely he found himself night and day !

Driven by excess of anguish, he rose at all hours, and he wandered about the house, making the ancient joists to creak beneath his fevered tread, drinking in the tears which coursed down his cheeks....

Sometimes, craving air, he opened a window, and, with his elbows resting upon the sill, he gazed at the heavens, — the heavens all sown with stars.

One woman had pleased him among a thousand women, and among so many stars one star pleased him. That star was something to him.

Did she recognize him? Yes, without doubt. Otherwise, why that long look opened obstinately upon him, that long, deep, pure, calm, at times humid, look?... Ah, it is the look of his love!

And his eyes, his arms, his lips, begin to reach up on high; and his heart begins to beat as though it would burst from his breast....

Then, exhausted with fever and ecstasy, he let himself fall upon his knees; and the dawn, taking pity on him, brought him a little repose.

One day I met him going (in body, not in spirit) to his vineyard.

On perceiving me, he smiled; and I can still behold his strange smile.

"Well?..." I asked, wishing to speak to him, yet not knowing of what to speak.

He replied at once: "Well... I have seen her. They said she was dead; they think she is beneath the earth, down there!... It is folly! She is there above, alive!... I invite her to come down.... She would like to. Can she?... Ah, the poor woman!... In truth, it cannot go on so; we must return together, she with me, or I with her, for ever!".

XV.

A sojourn in the country pleases city folk greatly,—a brief and rare sojourn, in the fine

season, when all is verdure, flowers, fruit, songs of birds, lays of hay-makers, reapers, and vine-dressers; when the days are long, pure, and generous, the nights slightly warm and serene, the roads perfumed; when life is superabundant within us and around us; when Nature, hospitable queen, receives.

And the city people exclaim: "God! God! how admirable is the country! How I should like to live in the country! How happy you are to live in the country!" . . .

That the country is admirable is certain; that you would like to reside there is possible; but that it is good to live there is open to debate.

The country is not always flowery, nor melodious, nor ready with a welcome. After summer, autumn, winter; that is to say, cold, retreat, silence, mourning. The trees are bald and poor; the bushes depeopled, surly, sinister; the roads filled with ignoble mire; the meadows faded; the fields bare; the sky lugubrious; the air inclement and harsh.

Henceforth, the only refuge is the hearth: the hearth sparkling with life, gaiety, and flame in the cities; mean, monotonous, sluggish, cold, in the country! . . .

XVI.

A sample of the country does the city good; a sample of the city does the country good.

XVII.

Have you ever walked some road, green to right and to left, quite white in the middle, on one of those evenings of autumn, mysterious and solemn, which cause a man to hold his peace as in a church?

Then you have heard a voice issuing from the depths of the shadow, grave, sonorous, penetrating, sad as a sob, plaintive as a sigh.

A poet calls the frog a "little monster with soft eyes." That saying has caused laughter. Why has he not, rather, praised his voice! We might have smiled, perhaps. . . .

That liquid voice falls drop by drop into the obscure silence of things, like water from the rock into the granite basin; that voice vibrates and leaps through space like the bow of cork beneath the crystal keys of a harmonica.

A daughter of Saint Theresa said to me, "Admire the manner in which God has shared his gifts among his creatures! The peacock dazzles with his plumage, but his hoarse cry brings disenchantment. The nightingale is a paltry bird; it is clad like a beggar; when it sings, there is no music so delicious. And the frog, how ugly he is! Ah, good Jesus, how ugly the creature is! Nevertheless (and I say it to you only), he alone, amid solitude, moves me

according to my desire, and helps me to meditate." . . .

XVIII.

Mme. de Sévigné and La Bruyère have a gloomy page upon the peasant, which our economists and politicians, singularly moved, and with reason, quote triumphantly: "Ah! how much better is the condition of the inhabitant of the country, thanks to the revolution!" . . .

In truth, the lot of the peasant is always the same. Take a great lady, accustomed to the splendors of the faubourg, or some prince of finance, fascinated with the luxury and the comfort of Paris; show them suddenly, on the spot, the sordid dwelling of one of our good peasants, his frightful bed, his dirty table, his course bread, his hard and heavy linen and his vile clothes, his loathsome food and his nauseous drink, his life narrow, harsh, desolate, imposed upon by every one, deceived by all, rendered harder by all,—show them this, all this and the rest, and if they do not utter a cry of horror, of pity, perhaps, for the great moralist and the good letter-writer, it will be because they have neither heart nor mind.

XIX.

Every countryman who learns to read and write, renounces the country in his heart.

XX.

The peasant who establishes himself in the city falls by his own weight into the lowest depths.

XXI.

A rare bird is the *ex-peasant* who is delicate and not arrogant.

XXII.

The countryman is too much of a child not to be a liar.

XXIII.

I have known peasants who thought too well of the sun. That centre of light and heat appears to them, by its habits, by its movements and its beneficent action, a superior creature, and even a creator, the Creator! There is always something of the "pagan" in the "peasant."

XXIV.

The peasant is ignorant of the art of expressing his thought directly and clearly: the truth of a matter is not what you will hear about it, but what you will divine with regard to it.

XXV.

In Theocritus, and Virgil, and Florian, and Berquin, you do not imagine that the peasant, when he sings, sings anything but "beautiful

nature," virtuous love, God, his hearth-stone, the spring, flowers and fruits.... Illusion! The peasant devotes his mind to howling nonsense, his heart to mewing coarse jests!

XXVI.

The sun has just set in gold and purple, the moon shines in the horizon; stars twinkle around her; the cricket cries, the frog sighs, the butterfly rustles, the nightingale, full of love and harmony, bursts forth; all is joy and light and song and mirth and prayer and transport....

Where is man? There below he is sleeping heavily, incapable of all else after having drunk the wretched wine which he has thrown up in the form of vile songs!

XXVII.

When a poor peasant dies, it is not he whom one pities (*plaindre* also signifies to regret in our Limousin language), but his wife, his children, the property which he leaves in disorder. The disceased's whole household might almost be buried with him, so natural are *suttees*.

XXVIII.

The man of the fields is incomplete without his beast of burden; take away his ox, his cow, his ass, and you spoil him. The Decalogue

raises a smile. . . . Moses knew his man. The legislation of the Middle Ages also protected the beast of burden.

Thus is explained the fast imposed upon animals, their accessory extermination or their salvation: *Homines et jumenta salvabis, Domine.*

The farewell of the Arab horseman has long been the subject of song and story. And the regrets of the laborer for his oxen, of the housewife for her cows? It seems to me that a Millien or a Langlade would have found here a fruitful theme.

Those who reproach Pierre Dupont for his famous refrain, —

"J'aime Jeanne ma femme; eh bien! j'aimerais mieux
La voir mourir, que voir mourir mes boeufs! . . ."

"I love Jeanne my wife; well, I should much prefer
Rather than see my oxen die, to see the last of her!"

do not consider that a wife costs nothing, and that oxen cost a great deal; that a peasant can live and work without his wife, but not without his oxen. . . .

Thus Napoleon the Great counted the loss of a horse dearer than that of a soldier.

XXIX.

The dandelion.

Consider it; an upright stalk, a round head, set with winged seeds, all white and quivering. . .

One would say a ball of needles; one would say the helmet of a paladin bristling with darts.

The breeze, at dawn of day, blows gently, gently gathers them, gently embarks them; and the pretty flotilla sails before the wind at God's pleasure, mounting, descending, advancing ever, furnished with its own ballast and its own sails; the ballast is the seed, which weighs it down below; the sail is the tuft which bears you on, mysterious skiffs!

And the innocent armada alights where God calls it. It is often in an arid spot. The blessed immigration establishes itself in this desert, decks it with flowers, comforts it, peoples it, while other seeds departing thence, go to colonize other places in their turn.

May the gratitude of man salute, in those distant regions, the wandering plant, with name as graceful as itself!

XXX.

She is a large and robust spinster, slow of mind and of word, faded by age and poverty.

She tranquilly pursues her little path. To help with the harvest and the vintage; to break hemp, to spin wool, for other people, of course; to tend a neighbor's child; to rear, as she can, a wretched little pig, which she will sell at the end of a year for a miserable sum, this or nearly this is her whole occupation.

Naturally, hunger sometimes pays her a visit; no one suspects it except the good God to whom she prays in church, alone, at the hour when people are supping in their houses. Sometimes the poor woman sinks with exhaustion. Then alms flow in abundantly:—

"But, Bénédicte, when you are in want, why do you not beg?"—"Beg? Death rather than that!"

"Then, why have you not married?"

"Hé! No one wanted me."

XXXI.

O peasant, thou tillest the fields and fertilizest them, and sowest them;

Thou makest the wheat to rise from the earth;

Through thee, the "barren" is converted into grain;

Thou nourishest man, who is flesh.

It is thanks to thy efforts that we live here below.

Thou buriest a dead, cold seed, which soon revives, and flowers, and fructifies. . . .

Glory to thee, O peasant!

O priest, thou tillest souls, thou enrichest them with the word, and the example and the seeds of faith, hope, and love.

Thou makest God to descend from heaven;

Through thee, the wheat is changed into God;

Thou nourishest man who is a soul;

It is thanks to thy efforts that we live on high.

Thou dost bury a body forsaken by life, and destined to decay; but this body, reconciled to its soul, will rise one day, and that day will be as long as eternity! . . .

O priest, glory to thee!

XXXII.

Towards the end of the second Empire, the peasants showed themselves rabid Imperialists; they voted as one man in favor of the "Gentle Cæsar." And the politicians of Paris began to cry: "Brutes of peasants!" etc. They despaired of winning the peasant. They misunderstood him.

The prefects once changed, the mayors replaced, the deputies renewed, the peasant, who was believed to be attached to the very soil trodden by the Rouhers and the Mornys, passed over completely, arms and baggage, to the Republic.

And behold him a Republican until further orders.

The peasant never sets out quickly, but he always arrives surely.

XXXIII.

When will it come to pass that the peasant alone will be ashamed to speak the language of his fathers?

XXXIV.

THE WITCH.

A philosopher has defined man as "a religious animal." Why am not I a philosopher? I would define the peasant as "a superstitious animal."

O Paul Bert, thou canst tear the heart from the hedgehogs of Brive; thou wilt never take faith from our peasants. This faith is not always in conformity with the Gospel: no matter! it is still faith, less abominable to men and angels than incredulity. The countryman, in spite of instructors, in spite even of the curés, believes in sorcerers and witches, like the Romans, like the Gauls. Canidia is not dead, nor Velléda either. Ask Mérigale!

"Knock! knock!

"— Who goes there?

"— It is we, Mérigale.

"— What do you wish?

"— The daughter of Jantou of Marsalieu, has been burned all over with petroleum which was poured upon her by mistake. Come, heal her. . . ."

It is far to Marsalieu: the clock strikes midnight; the sky is as black as pitch. . . .

Mérigale hesitates. . . . Then: "Wait for me; I will come down."

And she hastily fastens her petticoat, her dress; throws a handkerchief about her neck, puts on her "straw," her galoshes. . . .

"The case is urgent, then?"

"It is."

"Let us go!"

Two women hasten to the right and left of the witch; five or six men precede them, some carrying lanterns, others wisps of lighted straw, others still cudgels. . . .

Forests, meadows, thickets; hedges, brooks, and ditches are traversed at racing speed. . . . O Rembrandt!

And the procession gallops, gallops, gallops on. . . . Woods, bushes, moors, question each other in the darkness: "Where is Mérigale going at this hour? . . . The owl forgets to hoot, and 'tis all the better so; the nightingale breaks off her nocturne of love, and 'tis all the worse; the frog, on hearing the earth resound, inquires in his crystal voice: "Is it a witches' sabbath?"

And the train gallops, gallops, still. . . .

Plains, valleys, hills, hold soft converse: "But it is not Christmas, that Mérigale should go to midnight mass? What is going on in the country? There is surely something new. . . ." The watch dog barks at her, mistaking her for the moon; in the depths of the stable lows the ox; the herdsman roused from slumber, mur-

murs, with eye pressed to the pane of his cabin: "The Spectre Chase. . . ."

And the train gallops on. . . .

"It is here! . . ."

Mérigale enters, haughty and mysterious.

"The sick girl?"

They point to the poor young girl, gasping, screaming, swathed in bandages.

Mérigale, full of her rôle, observes in silence that open mouth, which utters cries of pain, those limbs which contract, those arms which are contorted. . . .

Those around her wait. A horrible waiting, composed of contemplation and anguish!

Suddenly:—"Ashes! fire! flame!"

No one understands, no one stirs.

"—A chafing-dish and embers!"

They hasten, they elbow each other, they contend for the kitchen utensils. . . .

A large earthen dish is placed on the table, over against the bed, before Mérigale.

"*Favete linguis!*" a priestess of Vesta would have said. Our witch contents herself with exclaiming:—"No noise!"

The spectators hold their peace; the unfortunate girl herself looks and listens.

Then Mérigale raises her eyes to heaven, blows upon the embers, and makes the sign of the cross over them, over the dish, over the

child (the number three is sacred): then sighs, then coughs, then sneezes; then mutters a *Pater*, then whispers an *Ave*, then quavers a *Credo;* then strikes three blows upon her right hand, then three blows upon her left; then grumbles and hisses out a mass of interjections as frightful as they are uncouth, and which make you think of the witch scene in *Macbeth.* Finally she chants the cabalistic syllables of *Little Albert*, jerking them out slowly. . . .

Here the witch resumes her ordinary expression of countenance, and her natural voice.

"Is it done?"

"Yes, it is done."

A long sigh of relief runs through the room. . . .

The little one's father comes forward.

"Thanks. . . . How much do we owe you?"

"Nothing."

"The good God will requite you!" says the mother.

Barely a fortnight has passed; she presents herself before Mérigale, and from the depths of a huge basket she draws out a pair of ducks, an enormous pat of butter, a bottle of garus elixir, and two pounds of wool.

"All that for me?"

"My husband has beaten over the whole of Marsalieu to catch a hare for you; impossible to find one, to his great regret."

"The good man! . . . And the little girl?"

"The little one suffers no longer."

"Really?"

"Dead! dead!"

XXXV.

The war of the slaves in Italy, the war of the serfs in France, have bequeathed to history a particularly mournful memory. . . .

Oh, ye who rob the peasant of his beliefs and his money, stuffing his pocket with vile journals and his heart with brutal desires, beware of the reprisals which he will owe you for having put him back into slavery, into servitude!

XXXVI.

"Spare whom? This virtuous man? A virtuous man is inoffensive. This wicked man? Yes, he may injure me." . . .

Thus speaks every peasant.

XXXVII.

A heavy rain has been falling since yesterday.

Rain is dismal in the country.

Here there is no one to converse with: the isolation is absolute.

A certain description of Washington Irving haunts my memory; it concerns a traveller who

has been detained in a country tavern by a rain storm. Ah! how well that rain is expressed! One sees it, one hears it falling and disappearing in the water beneath the eaves; and the ennui of the gentleman becomes the ennui of the charmed reader.

My ennui is not reflected, nor that which comes from pleasure. I do not read the ennui of another person; I feel my own. It is less poetical. . . .

Behold me alone amid the depths of night, alone amid the heavy rain which makes the young leaves rustle. The nightingale, newly come, ceases her moan beneath this sullen rain; a warm summer rain would not thus benumb her. The moon, instead of rolling through the clear firmament round and splendid as the silver wheel of some mysterious chariot, — the moon drags herself wearily behind the opaque clouds.

There are those who journey very far, to seek solitude and silence. I have found these last, poor me, without so much trouble, and more profound, more persevering, than my desire. . . .

I have not lived yet, not yet have I acted; all the little which I have been able to undertake, has always burst in my hand.

In former days, unoccupied in spite of myself, I still hoped. . . .

To-day, too old by ten years, I hope no more.

No past: no future.

I have always desired to live intellectually, ideally, divinely; and I have never done anything but vegetate and languish! . . .

The depths of the country! the depths of the province! the vilest of men in the vilest of lands! . . .

I do not wish, in saying this, to set at naught my dear Limousin, nor to scorn myself, a man, a Christian, and a priest. But do you see where and what I am? A nothing in nothingness.

Many console me . . . lamentable consolation! Thus do people console and amuse a dying man, by trying to persuade him of what they themselves doubt.

XXXVIII.

Three sorts of people die without affectation: the priest, the soldier, and the peasant.

XXXIX.

A monster has lately come into existence: the infidel peasant.

XL.

Peasants are caught by the mouth, like fish.

XLI.

The last to cling to dying nations are the priest, out of love, the peasant, from force of habit.

XLII.

A certain peasant would have passed for less acute had he been thought less stupid.

XLIII.

The peasant refers everything to the mouth, like little children.

XLIV.

The peasant passed from paganism to Christianity through great expenditure of miracles; he would return from Christianity to paganism at a less cost.

XLV.

A peasant is a man very much as a block of marble is a statue.

XLVI.

The peasant has two words to designate the companion of his life: *femena, femna.* The "femna" is only the female of man; the "femena" is also the female of the animal. On this score, my "femena" should be employed but little, or not at all. It is, nevertheless, the favorite term.

XLVII.

Children, women, and peasants like to be flattered, which is as much as to say, that they like to be deceived.

XLVIII.

The city does not take away, neither does the country give, solitude; solitude is within us.

XLIX.

If we search well in the subsoil of many a peasant, we shall end by discovering a certain superior sense, which is difficult of explanation, but which must be admitted.

L.

"The fatherland!" A fine word, certainly, and one which sounds well, and which makes everyone start up, except the peasant. In order to make the peasant rise up in his might, cry: "Thy house, thy fields, thy money!... beware!..."

LI.

The peasant dies of hunger all his life that he may have something to live on after his death.

LII.

Far away, yonder, the sky appears all red.

"It is the sunset," says the man.

Wrong! it is his house on fire!

One of those wretches, so many of whom pass among us nowadays, set a fuse beneath the door, and the house has burst into flames.

The man darts forward, crying, "Fire!" . . .

Then he bethinks himself, halts at a reasonable distance, crouches down on the trunk of a tree, listening to see if anyone is coming, and wishing that they may come too late:

The house is insured!

Meanwhile the alarm-bell bleats; people rush from the neighboring villages: "The furniture? Come!"

The man stirs not, makes no reply.

The furniture is insured!

So burn on in peace, ye cupboards and chests of his ancestors; burn, bridal bed, and cradle lately cold; burn, picture of the Virgin Mary, patron of the dead wife! (Alas! he will soon replace her, when his house is once rebuilt. . .) burn, military tunic! burn, little frame of his first communion. Souvenirs of glory, of love, and of grief, souvenirs ancient and recent, burn on in peace:

He is insured!

LIII.

Our peasants tolerate God well: "He is not there, if he is anywhere, and besides, he demands neither gold nor silver." On the other hand, they endure but ill the men of God, the pope, the bishop, the curé. . . .

To tell the truth, they would tolerate their other masters still less if they dared!

LIV.

"What, shall he, the peasant, who needs everything, pay the curé who needs nothing!"... Idiotic reasoning. Admirable reason! thinks the peasant.

LV.

The peasant never takes a walk.

The peasant gives his arm to his wife, for the first and last time, on their wedding-day.

LVI.

To sell no matter what, no matter how, to no matter whom; behold in three words the whole diplomacy of the peasant at the fair.

LVII.

The peasant has a second home, where he enjoys himself no less than in the other, and it is the fair ground.

LVIII.

The peasant, as soon as he arrives at the fair, ceases to be a Christian, to be a man. He is a spider in the centre of his web. Neither the voice of blood, friendship, nor respect is anything to him any longer. "In war one must adopt the methods of war! at the fair the methods of the fair!" One is conscious that

he feels resolved to sell as quickly and as dearly as possible, to cheat even his neighbor, even his own father and mother!

LIX.

Absenteeism and Malthusianism are visibly depopulating our country districts. The Natchez and the Mohican have had their turn. The next subject for a book will be: "The Last of the Peasants!"

LX.

The petty peasant who wishes to acquire a competency; the peasant in easy circumstances who wishes to found a family; the ex-peasant who wishes to become *monsieur*. Malthus furnishes the law for all of you, does he not? . . .

LXI.

In spite of the fact that they are still young, they will have but one son.

And this son, a spoiled child like every only son, has come near perishing beneath a crumbling wall, in his turbulence and rashness.

"It would have been a lesson for the parents!" said a villager, who witnessed the affair, with a mysterious smile.

LXII.

If the ex-peasant is father to a male child first of all, it is enough! If he has only daughters,

he will persevere until the arrival of a boy. This tardy son will be the eldest, the only child, to speak rightly. The rest will stir only at his beck and call. He will have as many servants as he has sisters. None of them will get settled, all will devote themselves to monsieur, their brother, and to his wife. If one of them speaks of taking the veil, there is a long suit to argue. The good father is inexhaustible in *whys* and *hows*. "So you no longer love me?" he sighs; then, "Who will counsel, guide, take care of your poor brother?" . . . Then he begins to discourse about the clergy who tear children from their family, and to rage against that "era of ignorance and fanaticism, abolished by the great revolution, when the victims of the cloister . . . etc. . . ." The vocation will be finely tempered if it does not break in this assault of sensibility and hypocrisy!

LXIII.

"Scratch the Russian," said Napoleon, "and the Tartar will reappear." And you, ye people who favor obligatory instruction, polish and varnish the peasant as much as you please, the "peccata" will still remain; and it is fortunate that it is so, since you must eat bread.

LXIV.

The saint tastes death, the philosopher drinks it, the peasant swallows it.

LXV.

The peasant of the olden time revolted *à propos* of everything, *à propos* of nothing; the modern peasant does not revolt; he hardly complains: he has universal suffrage, a pretty toy, to divert his attention.

LXVI.

"Liable to villain-tax and contribution of forced labor at pleasure! . . ." Thus spoke the ancient law as it is maintained. The modern law does not speak: too much speaking does harm. It is a quicker matter to load down "the beast with a thousand heads," to load it again, to load it without end. The modern law is very sly.

LXVII.

The hygienist: "Air as well as bread is of the first importance; air, windows, my good man!" —"Yes, sir."

The collector: "So many openings, so many taxes: pay up!" —"Yes, sir! . . ."

Whereupon, stopping up three windows out of four: —

"No more air for me, no more light, nor health, nor joy, except out of doors, beneath the sky of the good God!" says the peasant with a sigh.

LXVIII.

". . . Our fathers cried out when they were deprived of a tithe, a tenth of their revenues; and you, you pay three and four tithes. . . ."

Who speaks thus? Dreux-Brézé in a mandamus? Dupanloup in a pamphlet? Rochefort, Veuillot or Cassagnac in an article? . . .

This language comes from a child of the people, from a great manufacturer who is fond of convincing a man of madness in order that he may deign to allow himself to be healed, that poor Jean Guêtré, who "has been invoking thee for thousands and hundreds of years, oh, republic of the peasants?"

LXIX.

Our peasants never return from the city without a loaf of white bread, with which to regale themselves in the bosom of their family. This *gentleman* bread chewed slowly, respectfully, so to speak, possesses for them the savor of forbidden fruit, although they esteem black bread, their own bread, more invigorating and more healthful.

LXX.

For the peasant, the word *Christian* is synonymous with the word *man*. Admirable acceptation, in which the informing spirit of the church makes itself plainly felt.

LXXI.

The rural postman. Ye city folk, accustomed to be spoiled by the post which coddles you at all hours, you have no idea of the great place which the rural postman occupies in the existence of us country people; with what impatience he is expected, and with what emotion he is greeted when he makes his appearance once a day, with his regulation cap, his blue blouse, and that leather sack which contains so many secrets!

One is uneasy and hopeful while one is young. One still believes in long memories and lucky chances. "I may suddenly learn that I have ceased to be useless and obscure. Providence is a good mother. Fortune is blind, they say; on that score she is free from partiality. Perhaps I have at length won in that lottery the prize which is drawn now by this person, now by that, amid the throng, and which introduces him abruptly from the waiting-room where one pines away, to the hall of honor promised to the fortunate."

A knock. It is he! I open quickly. And letters, journals, pamphlets fill my hands. A general curiosity is followed by a curiosity, restricted in limits, but all the more lively.

I carry my prize aside. Naturally, I run over the most interesting. . . .

What is there new in Paris, that capricious and terrible city? And my poor little native town, so humble in France, so great in my heart, is it tranquil? Such an one is ill, such another is dead. . . . The dearest friend of my childhood is to be married: joy and patience to the new couple! . . .

The postman has taken his departure after wishing me "Good evening," to which in my abstraction, I make but slight reply. Before his coming I hoped, I feared. I shall begin again in the same way to-morrow and always: to fear, to hope, is not this all of life? And does man do anything else on the earth except wait always for a happiness which never comes?

The world which is within me, has been troubled from thought to thought, like a deep sheet of water, from undulation to undulation; my soul is different from what it was a moment ago; things change around me.

Thus a humble postman binds my solitude to the entire universe; thanks to him, nothing human is foreign to me. A poor man who sus-

pects nothing, produces this profound impression on my heart; the voice of this wretched being vies with a fine piece of music or a powerful poem in agitating me.

LXXII.

"O priests, these peasants to whom you preach incessantly, seem none the better for it!" . . .

It is true. But oh! how soon they would appear worse, if we preached to them rarely or never!

LXXIII.

Obscure germ, remain beneath the earth. Why shouldst thou wish to come forth and to blossom? Thou dreamest of the sun, the breeze, the dew. Alas! the sun scorches, the breeze harasses, the dew crushes down and soils. In the broad daylight trouble, not peace, awaits thee; pain, not joy; and if some glory is promised to thee, it will be vain and brief. . . . Remain beneath the earth, obscure germ.

I will be a flower, I must be a flower. Ordeal for ordeal, 'tis better to suffer in the light than in the shadow. For I suffer here. And I do not find it true, that isolation is happiness. Night surrounds me, the earth oppresses me, the worm affronts me. Desire, above all, is killing me. I must be a flower, I will be a flower.

LXXIV.

The peasant loves the city and detests the citizen; the citizen loves the country and detests the peasant.

LXXV.

A stone detaches itself from the wall and rolls to the middle of the road. . . . Who will pick it up? Who will restore it to its place? The stone is there, says the peasant to himself; let it stay there! It is a question of passing over or around it. One year later, ten years later the stone will still occupy the same spot, like the god Terminus.

LXXVI.

May the good God grant me some day to quit the country, and thenceforth, the country, viewed through my memories, through my regrets, will perhaps have charms for me; like the faces of parents who were harsh to us, and which appear to us so gentle to gaze upon, when they are no more!

LXXVII.

Some one has accused me of reproaching the peasant with lack of patriotism; that some one has not understood me.

No, the peasant will not rise to defend that which neither his hand nor his intelligence can touch! Country is a word which signifies noth-

ing to him. What you call Country, you men who know, is a thing which interests him but little, poor ignorant creature!

Nevertheless he has a country, which is not the whole of the other, but which is a part of it.

The child clings to its mother, by clinging to the skirt of her dress. The peasant who takes the trouble to defend his land, his hearth, his village, takes the trouble at the same time to defend the country. I have not said that the peasant was not patriotic. A little more and I would affirm that he is as much so, after his fashion, as thou, thou tiller of paper!

LXXVIII.

Our country districts are difficult to traverse. One must pass through meadows, fields, forests, everywhere except along the roads. These narrow, tortuous roads, with their embankments, make one think of the Styx and of Erebus, so full are they of black, liquid, tainted mud: *Styx atra.*

Our people, shod with wooden shoes higher than the antique cothurnus, leap from one stone to another without stumbling, almost without looking, and swaying from side to side. Imagine giants with a boat on each foot by way of shoes. The idea of paving the road, in order to remove the obstacle, never occurs to them.

LXXIX.

The countryman is less slow in sending for the veterinary for his beasts than for the doctor for himself. Ah! when the doctor is summoned, the sick man is very sick indeed! Fifteen francs a visit is still another malady! and "illness upon illness is not health!"

LXXX.

He passes by, drunken with pride and perhaps with brandy, brandishing a vote.

I am tempted to cry out: "Stop him! he is mad! he is armed! he is going to commit an evil deed!" . . .

Poor good man, sold for a full bottle or an empty promise, to the Michel Morins and to the Robert Macaires of politics! Poor good Christian, who gives his voice to the breakers of the cross, to the larcizers of schools, of hospitals, of churches! Poor dear parishioner, faithful to mass on Sunday, and to his communion on Easter, obstinate, nevertheless, in upholding the devourers of curés! . . .

LXXXI.

The peasant still lives under the law of fear; the law of love is a dead letter to him.

LXXXII.

The peasant limits his duty to keeping the house in bread. All other household needs are as though they did not exist. "The little one must have a dress," says the mother. — "A dress! a dress! . . . Then make one out of one of your cast-off gowns!" — "I have used up everything long ago, and the rags in which I now drag about every day are all that I have left!" — "Enough! The little money which I have, I need for myself! . . ." And the poor woman, having drained all her resources, exhausted all expedients, daring neither to borrow nor to beg (for their house is a prosperous house), resigns herself to stealing in her own home; and she sells, secretly, butter, poultry, wheat, etc., to save the honor of her family!

LXXXIII.

"The hail has played its usual pranks: the Saint Michael, our best harvest, is lost; the red wheat dispersed to the four winds of heaven; the buckwheat cut to pieces, crushed, and soiled; of the dung-heap, what! The few grapes which had come out, scarcely enough to make a little dreg-wine, trampled down as if in a vat!"

"There is some spell in it."

"Some spell? I understand. But who has cast the spell?"

"I do not wish to sin, but . . ."

"Hé! speak, you ceremonious woman."

"Here then: I have been told — I did not see it — that M. le Curé of X—— stopped at Font-Vive, under the pretext of watering his horse. The horse was a long time drinking. It was as hot as an oven yesterday; and the curé plunged his arms into the basin up to the elbow, and then he shook them, as though he were shaking a holy-water sprinkler, and then he looked at the sky, and moved his lips; then he dipped his handkerchief in the water and wrung it. What he murmured was not quite understood, but people thought they heard the word "Storm."

"Really? . . . Ah! it is he who brought the hail! . . ."

"Surely. Everybody knows that curés bring hail. My husband has often ridiculed me for doubting it, in the beginning. . . ."

And our fiddle-faddles in Paris say in print, that, as soon as the peasant is taught to read and write, he is in the way of progress; and that in less than fifteen years he will be lacking in nothing! And people talk of the ignorance of the olden times, of the superstitions of the Middle Ages, as though ignorance and superstitions did not exist always, everywhere, — the weeds of that more or less cultivated garden which is called human society!

LXXXIV.

This peasant has discovered a very ingenious means of enriching himself, which is to lend out, at interest, money which he has borrowed gratis.

LXXXV.

After a frost which changes the green mantle of spring into soiled and pendant rags, after a storm which slashes vines, wheat, and fruit-trees, those adornments of summer, those treasures of autumn, the poor peasant, suddenly robbed of his labors, is truly fine to contemplate: "God has given, God has taken away; blessed be his holy name." This word of Job is not on his lips; he does not know it; but this word is contained in his resigned silence. A marvellous subject for a picture, the peasant surveying his kingdom, which has been laid waste by a storm!

Nevertheless, to be exact, revolts do arise here and there, revolts which are sometimes satanic! Shall I say it? Madmen have been seen shaking their fist at heaven, or even levelling their gun, loaded with ball, at the zenith, and firing without a movement of the eyelids, in order to hurl dead from his throne Him who reigns on high!

LXXXVI.

The peasant lacks simplicity, through ignorance and false taste. If he sings, his song is

silly, it is not simple; if he dresses, it is not simply, but strikingly, offensively, grotesquely; if he builds, nothing is put in its place, all is out of proportion, without convenience or beauty. Give a peasant a long and broad piece of cloth, a spacious piece of ground, instead of a simple coat, a vast house, he will cut and build for himself some scanty, complicated thing, I know not what, where his mind will be at ease just in proportion as his body is under constraint.

LXXXVII.

The most intolerable creature to the peasant who farms on shares is . . . the collector? — No. — The bailiff? — No. — The marauder? — You have not guessed it yet; it is the proprietor of the farm, a funded gentleman of recent date, an artisan, who has grown rich, who knows no other pleasure at present than handling the spade, driving the plough, planting, sowing, and, above all, giving advice. The poor peasant has him always before or behind him, like his shadow. "Such a thing must be finished, such another must be begun; this must be done thus or otherwise; pay attention to this or to that. . . ." The rustic boor becomes irritable, fretful. . . . With great difficulty does he restrain himself: a forced smile, an equivocal assent, serve him for a reply. At evening, he

returns home more weary than is his wont, full of secret grumbling, and committing the *gentleman* to all the fiends, under his breath.

LXXXVIII.

The spot is fertile; the wheat elbows the vine; the chestnut and walnut are neighbors to the apple and the peach; maize and buckwheat grow side by side. The stables are full of cows, pigs, and lambs; the poultry-yards are peopled with chickens; milk, eggs, butter, and cheese abound; "Comfort and ease dwell here," you think. Wrong. Ask the notary; question the huckster; and one will admit that he can no longer get enough money to lend; and the other will confess that ruin frequents the country, and that one would never suspect the poverty which afflicts nearly every family, even those who have the appearance and the reputation for wealth. . . .

And yet the peasant of to-day makes money out of everything; everything, except wheat, is sold at a high price. Forty years ago a louis d'or was a rarity; a bank-note was a curiosity; old men had never seen one. In our day, gold-pieces are as common as the stones of the highway; paper money flutters about like leaves from the trees; and poverty is everywhere.

Let him explain this who can.

LXXXIX.

No one, after the priest, approaches nearer the divinity than the peasant.

XC.

Matheline, at first sight, is like any other peasant. A gown of serge, a cape of red cotton, a head-dress of coarse cloth. . . . Could anything be less elegant? But look at her face; observe it well: does it not remind you of the Pietà of Michael Angelo?

It is a thin, pale face, framed in flame-colored hair, streaked here and there with threads of silver. Wrinkles furrow her brow, her temples, her cheeks; those wrinkles are not all the work of time; grief, that mysterious worker, has hollowed out a portion of them; the bluish gray eyes, veiled by tawny lashes, shine with calm energy. The whole physiognomy inspires respect, would almost inspire fear, were it not that goodness and gentleness dwell in the folds of her lips, like doves in crevices of the rocks.

For Matheline is a brave woman. She is called, and with justice, the Angel of the cottage, the Apostle of the village, the counsel and comfort of all.

Her husband would have been a poor man, without virtue, if not without vice. He loved

the bottle; and what ills the bottle contains! It is the box of Pandora minus hope. Matheline, by dint of smiles and tears — smiles for the man, tears before God — succeeded in grafting a Christian conscience upon that gross nature, and making him bring forth, oh, miracle! fruits of probity and honor.

Matheline has three children, a boy and two girls. The eldest, Tissette, will marry when and how her parents desire; the other, Noreille, is only awaiting an opportunity to become a Little Sister of the Poor; the young man, who came into the world a little in advance of Noreille, and long after Tissette, will continue the house. Tissette commands, by right of birth, this brother and sister, who like to call her "little mamma," to tease her. In truth, she is like a second mother to them, resembling the other both in heart and face.

During the week, the father goes off to work in the fields, the children go to the woods as guards. Matheline parts from them with regret.

Left alone (and it must be so!), the day seems long, so long, to her! Finally, at night, they return, weary and joyous. She stands on the threshold waiting for them, she questions them, urges them on: "Quick, be quick, the soup is served, come! . . ." After the porridge, come "truffles" (this is our peasants' name for

potatoes). They eat much bread and drink a little wine. Then the family gathers about the hearth, on which a fire burns at all seasons for the warm mash of the "merchandise" (this is the term for the cattle which are being fattened). Then they shell the chestnuts for the first meal on the following day; then they go down to the stable to milk the cows; then they kneel in prayer; then each betakes himself to his chamber: "Farewell! until to-morrow!..." The whole day was toil; the whole night will be sleep. On Sundays there is a great vigil from five o'clock until midnight. Matheline will not kill time: she prefers to enliven and sanctify it. The neighbors seek the hospitality of this house. Nevertheless, all are not received indiscriminately. Away with swearers, libertines, and insolent persons! Silence, all gossip and intrigue! And the Man relates, for the hundredth time, the things of old, the Dragon, the Bère, the Werewolf, the Spectre Hunt; Matheline has a weakness for Geneviève of Nanterre, Isidore the Laborer, Pascal Baylon, and Germaine of Pibrac.... Tissette, and especially Noreille, recite Sacred History, the Gospels, the Catechism.... The canticles prevent yawns or sleep. The canticles? and nothing else? Yes! There are also chestnuts roasted in the ashes! cider! and sometimes, sometimes, claret

sent by some unknown person, Monsieur le Curé, no doubt! . . .

Of course, none of the watchers has missed mass or vespers. Matheline has but a poor opinion of any one who does not honor the Lord God. She and hers set an example of Christian fidelity. The boy accompanies the father to church. Matheline betakes herself thither, in her turn, between her daughters. The people range themselves in rows as they pass, and murmur, "Happy mother! happy daughters! . . ." When they come out, they go about among the groups, but not for long, to inquire about some relative, a friend, an invalid, or some poor person. . . .

For Matheline is the providence of the country. All needy people bless her. A man has cleft his skull, while gathering cherries — who will dress it? A woman has been taken ill — who will pass the night with her? This widow has lost her son in Tonquin — who will comfort her? Matheline. Where, pray, does she who has to earn her own living, who has hardly read, and who considers herself the most insignificant person in the parish, get the numerous alms which she bestows, the wise words which she utters, the noble and delicate sentiments which she exhibits? Where? From her faith. Oh, the good woman! oh, the holy woman!

XCI.

The poor child was at the point of death. A candle had been lighted in honor of the sacred Host, and also to permit a little sight within that black cavern. Those present knelt upon the damp earth. My eyes became imperceptibly used to the darkness, and I could at length discern the objects around me. The little cowherd lay upon a trestle-bed of badly joined boards; a truss of straw served for his pillow; a tattered packing-cloth was his sheet; his waistcoat, his breeches, and I know not what formless rags, formed his coverlet. Never in all my life had I encountered such misery. Amid all these hideous surroundings, the child beamed with resignation and innocence. Nothing was white save his face and the surplice of the priest; everything else appeared tawny or livid in that hut, where the timid light of the torch was overpowered by palpable shadows. And I bent my knee; then, rising, I poured forth the words of absolution upon the gentle patient; then approaching, and bending down, I laid upon his lips, already growing cold, the God of all consolation. At that moment, the clank of chains resounded, and the head of an animal emerged from an opening in the wall near the pallet, then another quite different head. . . .

It was a cow and an ass, who stretched out their necks lovingly towards the bed, to the barely covered feet of him who had formerly led them to pasture; and this sight suddenly made me shiver, and the tears rose to my eyes; and, as Christmas was at hand, I thought I had been transported to Bethlehem, during that great night: all was there, — the stable, the manger, the infant Jesus, for the poor are all Jesuses; that woman, his mother, represented the Divine Mother; those men, Saint Joseph; the shepherds, the magi; those two humble beasts the ass and the ox; that light, the miraculous star; I, the minister of salutation, the Angel sent to announce the great joy. . . .

As he breathed his last sigh, I exclaimed, "God descended from heaven into a manger, do thou, child, mount from this manger into heaven! . . ." 'Tis a memory which cannot be forgotten!

IX.

LOVE, FRIENDSHIP, FRIENDS.

I.

To love is to choose.

II.

Friends are rare, for the good reason that men are not common.

III.

The vital air of friendship is composed of confidence. Friendship perishes in proportion as this air diminishes.

IV.

We distrust our heart too much, and our head not enough.

V.

"Let us love each other. . . ." For our neighbor's sake? He is so unlovable! For our own sake? We are so unloving! For the sake of God, the only lovable, the only loving.

VI.

All human affection soon crumbles, if God, invoked as the cause, as the reason, as the end, does not strengthen and consecrate it.

VII.

Is to love ourself only to love?

VIII.

What we love in others is, our ideas, our tastes, our opinions. . . . — And our talents? . . . — Not at all.

IX.

The way Pamphilius receives me is to extend his arms to me from afar, to throw himself upon my neck, to embrace me, to raise me up, to bruise me with kisses, to seize my hands, to twist them, to shake them, and, gazing at me with exaltation, to ask all in a breath, and without waiting for a reply, about my health, my studies, my affairs, my parents, my acquaintances; to call me at every phrase, "My dear fellow! my dearest fellow!"

"Oh, large-hearted man! rare friend!" . . . I say to myself. And while rearranging my hair and wiping my face, I rack my brain for some response to such an effusion of tenderness. I turn round, I open my mouth. . . . Where is

Pamphilius? Pamphilius has disappeared! Behold him yonder in the distance, lifting up, and nearly suffocating in his arms, Gordian, whom he hardly knows, and who repeats, "Oh, large-hearted man! . . ."

X.

A face which is always serene possesses a mysterious and powerful attraction: sad hearts come to it, as to the sun, to warm themselves again.

XI.

The egoist does not tolerate egoism.

XII.

I do not always admire what I love, neither do I always love what I admire.

XIII.

Have friends, not for the sake of receiving, but of giving.

XIV.

Commonplace consolations are harsh for delicate sorrows.

XV.

Arcan draws me aside, and confides to me, with numberless precautions and endless exhortations, a trifling secret: "Be careful, at least! do not tell it, please, to a living soul! . . . if you were to compromise me! . . ." I reassure him.

Nevertheless, this fine secret has made the tour of the town in two days.

So some one has betrayed Arcan? — No doubt. — Who is it? — Himself. . . . Every one is his intimate friend, and he opens his heart equally to all.

XVI.

Your friend returns from a long journey. . . . Shall you confide in him at once? This is hardly prudent. What if he has changed? . . . Then feel him near his heart, for an instant, at least.

XVII.

The man of genius and the man of heart vie with each other in saying, "Understand me and you will love me. . . ." — "Love me and you will understand me!"

XVIII.

When we are loved by one person, or more than one, we become so accustomed to this sweet sensation, that we are tempted to cry out about injustice when we stumble against an enemy, or, I should say, an indifferent person, outside.

XIX.

I love enthusiasts; exalted people frighten me.

XX.

Dilectio, diligentia: a relationship of words which should be a relationship of things.

Is "love" which is inactive, sincere "love"?

XXI.

Here are two strange loves, — our love for ourselves who are so miserable, and our love for this life which is so full of woes.

XXII.

A certain sort of evil-speaking proceeds from love.

XXIII.

How many love God so intensely, so intensely that they cannot love their neighbor by reason of it.

XXIV.

Friendship admits of difference of character, as love does that of sex.

XXV.

As long as we love, we lend to the beloved object qualities of mind and heart which we deprive him of when the day of misunderstanding arrives.

XXVI.

To imagine that we know love, when it is not God whom we love, is to take this little pool of muddy water for the great sea with its azure waves.

XXVII.

Sphinx draws me aside and says to me with quite an interesting air: "There are three or four of us who propose to recommend you to the master. It is really a shame that a man like you should remain thus in obscurity. Yet we have feared to take too much upon ourselves; and I wish, before going further, to inform you of it, and to ask your opinion." — What need have you of my authority, Sphinx, to speak well of me? If you had served me without my knowledge, how much more merit you would have had, how much glory I? I understand: you take advantage of having wished it, as though you had said: "We propose, you say, to oblige you . . . " — "And I, Sphinx, propose to say, thank you, for it."

XXVIII.

God alone can properly bind up a bleeding heart.

XXIX.

Stomachs which have long been deprived of nourishment, weaken and succumb: thus hearts

long tried, resist a happiness which is late in coming.

XXX.

Let us carry our heart through life as we would carry a torch, with our hand about it, lest the wind should extinguish it.

XXXI.

What is love? two souls and one flesh; friendship? two bodies and one soul.

XXXII.

We vaunt our friend as a man of talent, less because he has talent than because he is our friend.

XXXIII.

We always distrust too much or too little.

XXXIV.

"Necessarius," the friend, the man who is necessary. . . . A deep word, an ingenius word, a touching word. When will it be French?

XXXV.

Friendship is the ideal; friends are the reality; reality always remains far apart from the ideal.

XXXVI.

The man abandoned by his friends, one after another, without just cause, will acquire the reputation of being hard to please, changeable, ungrateful, unsociable.

XXXVII.

Our friend, on the day of rupture, forges for himself a weapon against us from the fact that we are on bad terms with some one else, whether justly or not.

XXXVIII.

Let us be proud of a friendship without ever being vain of it.

XXXIX.

One feels tempted to say to certain persons, "If you deceive me, I will never again trust anyone."

XL.

However well proved a friendship may appear, there are confidences which it should not hear, and sacrifices which should not be required of it.

XLI.

Not all of those to whom we do good love us, neither do all those to whom we do evil hate us.

XLII.

The tenderness of some people is a torrent. On certain days it is over abundant, and it overflows; and then, what a drought!

XLIII.

Interest, ambition, fortune, time, temper, love, all kill friendship.

XLIV.

Cerberon and Pectorin fill, the one here, the other there, an inferior position all beset with irritating difficulties. The same trouble isolates them from the world, and draws them together. As each needs a confidant, they complain together, — Pectorin, who is gentle, sadly; Cerberon, the proud Cerberon, with bitterness; and some consolation visits them, at least while thus communicating their vexation to each other.

Cerberon, more fortunate than Pectorin, becomes his own master while still young. Behold him, then, his own master and, what is more, master of no one knows what poor fellow who displeases him at first sight, and of whom he complains in a letter to Pectorin. "What if you were to claim me for your own?" they write to each other. This idea flatters them. Neither of them will rest until it is realized.

Victory! Behold them together, these good

old friends, these ancient neighbors of the galleys! Oh, what joyous bursts of laughter! Oh, what embraces! Oh, what promises to be happy with each other, through each other! . . .

Long dinners, frequent walks, interminable tête-à-tête, games, music, reading, gossip about Peter and about Paul . . . that will last at least a week.

Cerberon, having exhausted his enthusiasm, makes haste to exhibit his irascible, peevish, arrogant character. The friend departs, the master remains. Who is surprised? Pectorin; Pectorin henceforth condemned to suffer doubly; for he who formerly comforted him is now the man who wounds him.

XLV.

Many, not being able to do without love, love at random. These wear out their people rapidly; a new friend each month would not be too much for them. At first all is flame. They unbosom themselves as much as they are capable of doing. This effusion once over, they yawn, complain, get angry, and depart.

XLVI.

Since in possessing you, we possess all if we had nothing else, and in not possessing you we have nothing if we had all the rest, oh, my

God, I will love you that I may possess you upon earth; and I will possess you that I may love you one day in heaven.

XLVII.

Neither frivolous enough to have comrades, nor credulous enough to have friends.

XLVIII.

Eubalus, in his youth, pierced both friends and foes with his arrows. A reputation for a malicious tongue is the price of his long toil. Every one fears him. In other days he found an advantage in it, now he reproaches himself for it. In order to win his way back into favor, he distributes right and left many a compliment, many a smile. What success responds to his efforts? People end by not fearing him, and begin to despise him.

XLIX.

Encomius addresses a word of praise to me. He knows well that I do not deserve it. I know it also. Nevertheless, I do not fail to smile with gratitude upon him. . . . Oh, the strength of flattery! Oh, the feebleness of man!

L.

Love, almost everything in romances, is almost nothing in life.

LI.

There are people who laugh to show their fine teeth; and there are those who cry to show their good hearts.

LII.

Souls naturally generous, but chilled by experience, resemble brooks covered with ice, which are full beneath of beautiful movements and sweet murmurs.

LIII.

Trees which the cold has touched do not perish at once. Spring visits them again with a remnant of sap, and decks them over again with a little foliage; then they die. . . . Thus it is with hearts which, deeply wounded, love, speak, smile for a space ere they die.

LIV.

We call that person who has lost his father, an orphan; and a widower, that man who has lost his wife. . . . And that man who has known the immense unhappiness of losing his friend, by what name do we call him? . . . Here every human language holds its peace in impotence.

LV.

King, priest, poet, call each other thou! Call each other thou, ye wearers of crowns!

LVI.

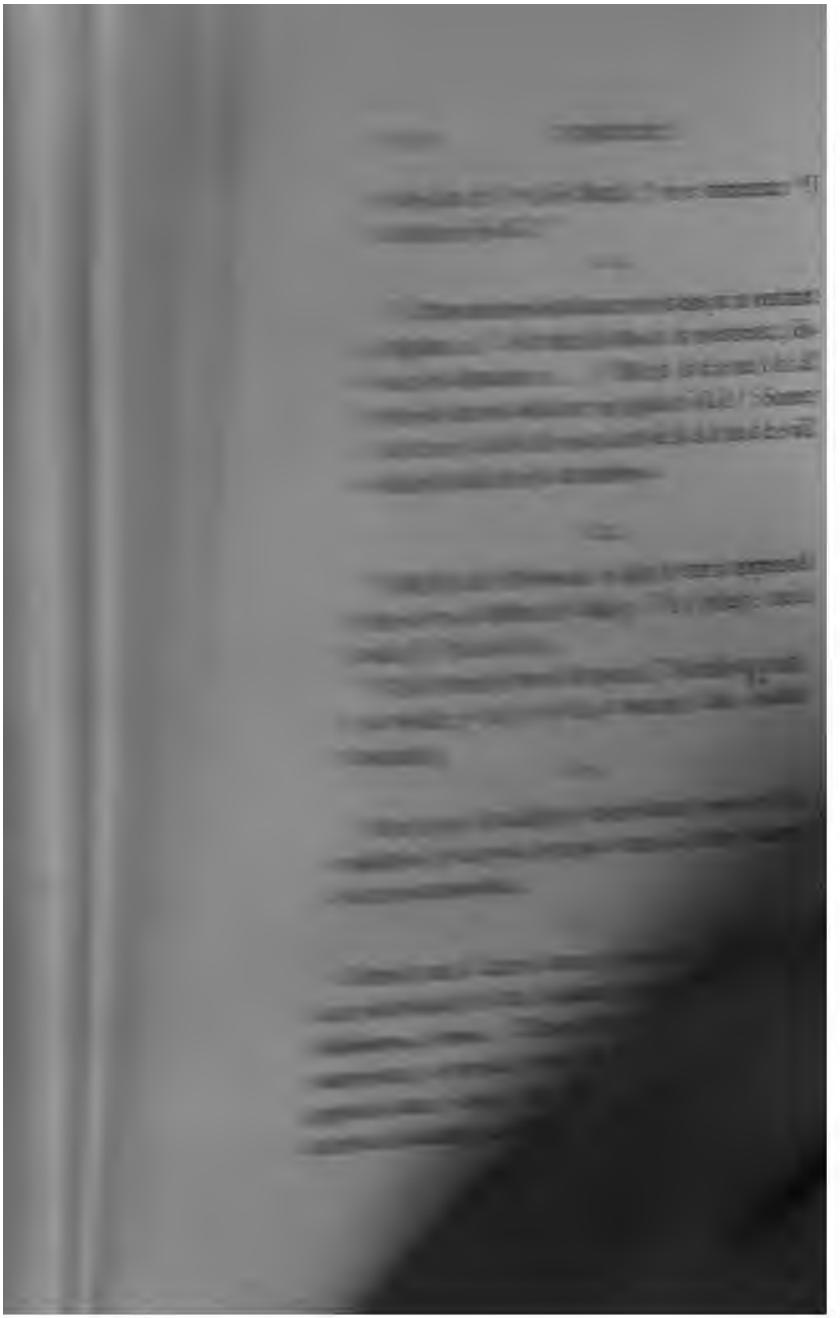
Every large family has its angel and its demon.

X.

GOD, RELIGION.

I.

SCITOLUS has studied everything; he remembers everything; he has all the dynasties of the Pharaohs at the tips of his fingers, all the incarnations of Vishnu, all the migrations of the Aryans; ask him about the colonies of Gaul, the divinities of Carthage, of Athens, and of Rome, the name, the age, the country of the Sibyls, the titles, subjects, personages, the authors of the pieces of the Greek theatre, he will answer all without an error. The pearl which Cleopatra dissolved in Cyprus wine, or the fish which Domitian put to the vote of the senate? "Questions for a schoolboy!" he will say, shrugging his shoulders. "Have you nothing to ask me but that trifle?" Thus it is an established truth, an understood thing, an attested fact, that Scitolus is ignorant of nothing. Thus it is imputed to disdain, if not to modesty, that when he held his sister's child at the baptismal font the other day, he could neither



VI.

Egoism willingly generalizes: if anything suits him, everything is going well; if anything does not suit him, everything is going ill.

VII.

The sun drinks in the drop of dew which casts back its rays, and God absorbs the soul which reflects him.

VIII.

O thou who art calumniated, have patience! God knows. Thou who art misunderstood, be resigned! God sees. Thou who art forgotten, have hope! God remembers.

us, even ourselves;
'tis he alone whom we

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ve him, more

XII.

Jesus Christ, says Saint Augustine, never performed a miracle for the sake of performing a miracle; and you, ye artists, imitators of God, you claim to paint for the sake of painting, to sing for the sake of singing, to write for the sake of writing. . . .

XIII.

Morality is the fruit of religion: to desire the former without the latter, is to desire an orange without an orange-tree.

XIV.

Man is naturally pious; he is virtuous only supernaturally.

XV.

Two sorts of men despise public opinion, — sinners and saints.

XVI.

Let us love God, not as much because he deserves — that we cannot do; but as much as we can — that he deserves.

XVII.

Catholicism is alone sincerely "human," because it alone is truly "divine."

XVIII.

"Love only me and others for my sake!" Admirable precept, absolute, yet just, urgent, yet tender!

Ah! if we loved God, this demand for love would not trouble us ingrates, would not incommode us, unbelievers that we are!

XIX.

When Louis XV. was ill at Metz, and began to convalesce, the populace, whom fear of losing their king had plunged in anguish which was worse than mourning, abandoned themselves to transports of wild joy on learning of his recovery. It is said that the king exclaimed, "What have I done to them!"

Thus God, who grieves when man is ill with sin, rejoices when he sees him regain life. And man asks, "What have I done to God?" What have you done to him, O man? To him who loves you and thought he had lost you! . . .

XX.

In the presence of God we speak too much; we do not listen enough. Let us allow the Master to speak. This is just; it will be profitable. Indeed, he knows what we know, and we do not know what he knows.

XXI.

Everything contends with God for us.

XXII.

Belief in one's self conquers the world; belief in God conquers heaven.

XXIII.

God endures us when we offend him; let us endure him when he tries us; *endurance* is one of the names of love.

XXIV.

Christian, philanthropist humanitarian. . . . Humanitarian, philanthropist, Christian.

XXV.

The good God is not proud. When the world will have none or will have no more of a beauty, of a glory, of a grandeur, of a soul, he claims it and takes it.

XXVI.

O priest, think not that when, at the foot of the altar, before the assembled church, you renounced the world, the flesh and blood, you uttered a vain formula. The people, jealous witnesses, understood naught of the Latin sylla-

bles, but they understood perfectly what they saw done; and woe to you, if you should chance — which God forbid! to forget your vow; they will force you to remember it, these people, however impious they may have become, and will recall you in rude fashion to your duty.

XXVII.

The true, the good, the beautiful. A thousand times have I tried to define this triple radiance of a glorious mystery. Vain effort! Who is powerless? The word? the mind? the man? myself? . . .

XXVIII.

St. Thomas d'Aquinas verifies as though he could not believe, and believes as though he ought not to verify.

XXIX.

Contemporary science is laborious, skilful, mighty . . . and blind. Yes, blind. Theology is the eye which it lacks.

XXX.

The believer and the unbeliever vie in saying, "Liberty!" But the one wishes to be free in order that he may make himself the slave of all; the other, in order that he may make all his slaves.

XXXI.

In our trials we run to God, and we do well. Only we are wrong in believing that God, because he is God, will infallibly grant prayer which we address to him, because we address a prayer to him. If the effect does not meet our expectations, we are scandalized; we doubt God and his Providence. . . . Suppliants should show more confidence, more resignation, and not "enjoin" God to deliver them from their trouble, thus placing before him the alternative of either doing our will or of forfeiting our good graces.

XXXII.

Let us lavish ourselves upon God alone.

XXXIII.

Love everybody for God, and few for thyself.

XXXIV.

All is open, all is in the air (letter to the French Academy). Who speaks thus of the Gothic cathedral? Fénelon; Fénelon who has become an ancient through a pagan-classic education, to the point of neither feeling nor thinking as a Christian, a priest, an artist.

All is in the air! Eh! yes; the Christian also is "in the air," and his soul losing beneath

the evangelical chisel its native heaviness, has quitted the earth to suspend itself and gleam resplendent in heaven.

XXXV.

An inscription has been found, a strange, mysterious inscription; some learned man halts, bends down, turns the enigma, and turns again; and the enigma rolls itself into a ball of spines like the hedgehog, and becomes the more inexorable, the more it is shaken and interrogated, which exasperates our learned man, who is reduced to exclaiming: "Oh, the foolish thing! oh, the vain caprice! oh, the gross carelessness! oh, barbarous age! . . ." And the Sphinx cries to himself, "*Barbarus his ego sum, quia non intelligor illis*" (I am barbarous to them because I am not understood of them).

XXXVI.

So long as philosophy neglects to teach belief, love, prayer, it will be condemned to be only an *ornamental science.*

XXXVII.

What is the present philosophy? An exercise of declamation for the use of schools, rather than a rule of conduct which is useful for life.

XXXVIII.

The philosophy of the colleges is unsolid food, which loads the stomach without nourishing the body.

XXXIX.

Whence come we? What are we? Whither are we going? All questions which perplex the human reason, which divine wisdom alone can solve.

XL.

The incessant calling into question of that which is already solved, or of that which is evidently not to be solved, constitutes the vain extravagance which people dare to decorate with the name of philosophy.

XLI.

A proof that human reason alone would not have discovered supernatural truths is found in the fact that they do not yet exist for its followers.

XLII.

Many philosophers imitate the maniac who closed the shutters of his chamber in broad daylight, in order to write by candle-light. The candle is the wisdom of the ancients; the full daylight is the eternal wisdom manifested in the Gospel.

XLIII.

If *the son of Mary* is nothing but a great philosopher, whence comes it, O, ye free-thinkers, that you love so little and profess so badly his philosophy?

XLIV.

They do nothing but affirm, on the one hand, the eternity of Matter, and on the other dispute the eternity of Life . . . Oh, contradiction! oh, calamity!

XLV.

"The soul," says the Council of Trent, "is the substantial form of the body." Admirable definition, unknown to the ancient philosophers, disregarded by the modern philosophers, and which sets forth in the light, without withdrawing it from its profundity, that great question of the *Homo duplex.*

XLVI.

Who is there that does not love the truth . . . speculatively?

XLVII.

The prejudices of the schools are obstinate. Let those refuse to free themselves from them who will. How many people who believe themselves to be grounded in reason, and are only grounded in routine, bear them about for a long,

long time, without being able to quit them, like those boys who still wear petticoats at an advanced age.

XLVIII.

Certain logicians never give but one reason, — the best one, I suppose. Others begin by enumerating all the reasons; then they say, "This is peremptory; that is open to dispute. . . ." Such tilters never fail to provoke both adversaries and spectators; I admit it; nevertheless, one must know how to wait upon their pleasure, and not to beat them harshly from the very threshold of their argument.

XLIX.

The same arguments which we deem forcible as applied to others, seem feeble to us when turned against ourselves.

L.

The incredulous cease not to clamor: "Oh, the disinterestedness of Crates! oh, the renunciation of Diogenes! oh, the austerity of Pythagoras and Epictetus! oh, the goodness of Marcus Aurelius! . . ." On the other hand, the humble and daily practice of all these virtues, and of others besides, renders them indignant, even horrifies them.

LI.

To hope to grasp such or such a truth by dint of abstraction, is to wish to lay hold of the sun or the moon by leaping: one quickly falls back.

LII.

Analysis, synthesis, reasoning, abstraction, and experience, wishing to take counsel together, begin by banishing sentiment, which carries away the light when it departs, and leaves them in darkness.

LIII.

Many metaphysicians recall Don Quixote mounted upon Clavifer; they shake about, rise in their stirrups, and spur forward with might and main, crying, "Come on!" The heat which they arouse in themselves, and in those about them, seems to them the atmosphere of the upper regions: "The infinite! the infinite!" In truth, they have not quitted the earth.

LIV.

The effort of human reason succeeded in discovering God, though very imperfectly. What remained was to serve God, to love God. Philosophy did not discover this, or the discovery amounted to nothing.

LV.

Anathema upon those rash beings who, under the pretext of desiring simply to know and to sound the depths, go straight to the roots, lay them bare, detach them, starve them so that the tree, with sap exhausted and strength consumed, falls at last, and with its dead boughs crushes the generations which are reposing beneath its shadow.

LVI.

"Man, depraved by pride, is so strangely his own enemy, that he conceives a hatred for the only doctrine which gives value to his existence; he would regard it as a triumph to establish upon the ruins of that celestial doctrine errors equally absurd and disheartening, and would taste, I know not what desperate joy, in insuring for himself, even at the expense of his reason, a wretchedness without remedy and without end. . . ." (Lamennais, *Essay on Indifference in the Matter of Religion*, Pagnerre's edition, Vol. I. Part II. Chap. II.)

Lamennais himself was surely that man "depraved by pride, so strangely an enemy to himself," who "conceived a hatred for the only *Catholic* doctrine which gave value to his existence" as a priest and an apologist. He "re-

garded it as a triumph to establish upon the ruins of that celestial doctrine" of humility before God and obedience to the Church "errors equally absurd and disheartening," and "tasted," without even being able to say, "I do not know," a desperate joy in assuring for himself, even at the expense of his reason, alas! "a wretchedness without remedy" here below, and "without end" elsewhere.

By dint of dissecting that rotten body of philosophy of the eighteenth century, the unfortunate anatomist has caught the poison from the corpse, like those practitioners who owe their death to imprudent autopsies.

LVII.

The Middle Ages "ratiocinated" about everything and everywhere; the new times fall into the opposite excess.

LVIII.

We do wrong to be proud, O my contemporaries! What do we possess? Fragments of doctrine, tatters of science. The men of the Middle Ages teach us too many things to permit of our imagining that we know much.

LIX.

What do you mean by your God? "Chance," that "being of reason" who has neither being nor reason?

LX.

To know one's self is the true; to strive with one's self is the good; to conquer one's self is the beautiful.

LXI.

"Methodical doubt," which was inoffensive in the hands of the reverent Descartes, becomes a dangerous weapon when it passes to his disciples. Descartes exempted the truths of faith; he was reminded of it. By dint of exaggerating, of misconstruing the system of their master, that which should serve the truth brought profit only to error. Methodical doubt changed into systematic doubt, into radical doubt; the means became the end, the way became the goal, and faith perished in many souls.

LXII.

The discovery of a planet, the invention of a machine, or the application of a system, etc., is proclaimed with trumpet and voice; but the truths which are diminishing, the morals which are vanishing, religion which is perishing, no one, no one thinks of them.

LXIII.

In theology, intuition works marvels. While ordinary intelligences are climbing the paths of

the holy mountain by force of study, the choicest minds gain its summit with one bound. They do not learn; they understand. Profound questions, sublime themes inspire them, delight them. They have the instinct of the divine. While the argument is going on in the dark, sudden flashes overflow them. What matter words and formulas? They see, they possess, they enjoy!

LXIV.

A poplar leaf hides our view of the sun; the slight substance of an earthly care hides from us the immense and radiant God.

LXV.

God often visits us, but most of the time we are not at home.

LXVI.

Intuition deceives us at first; facts belie our ideas as if at will; experience chastens us . . . and amends us. Little by little *foreseeing* no longer suffices for us; we wish to *see*, we accustom ourselves to *look* heedfully. Then intuition and observation, blended together, form as exquisite wisdom.

LXVII.

We are full of prejudices and antipathies with regard to God. We love him little because we

know him badly, and we know him badly because we love him little.

LXVIII.

Philosophers call God "the great unknown." "The great mis-known" would be more correct.

LXIX.

Cicero asserted that there was no folly which philosophers had not uttered. Suarez struck out "philosophers" to write "theologians." Thus, neither philosophy, the profane remedy, nor theology, the sacred remedy, wholly heal the mind of man which is tainted by original sin.

LXX.

Error is contagious by nature. . . . By its nature? No, by ours.

LXXI.

God occupies the base and the apex of Christian morality: the base as principle, support, and force; the apex as direction, goal, and reward.

LXXII.

When one fights for a holy cause, victory is glory here below; defeat is glory on high.

LXXIII.

The women of Ionia, on the point of giving

birth, fixed their eyes upon some beautiful statue, or upon some graceful picture, in order that the child might come into the world more graceful and beautiful.

Let us, Christians, have thus before our eyes some great example, in order that we may be born more perfect into the life of heaven.

LXXIV.

There is a "sense" of the True, and he who possesses it has the stuff for a philosopher; a "sense" of the Beautiful, and he who possesses it is born an artist; a "sense" of the Good, and he who possesses it has the vocation of a saint.

LXXV.

The same word in Hebrew designates good and beautiful. This word dates from the terrestrial Paradise. It bears witness to the antiquity of the language in which it occurs, and may serve as a proof to those who assert that Adam spoke Hebrew.

Since the original sin, Beauty and Goodness have ceased to be one and the same thing. That which is good is not always beautiful, neither is that which is beautiful always good. The effort and the aim of Art should be to re-establish its primitive identity. Ideal creation, like the divine creation, has need of this approbation.

Viditque Deus cuncta quæ fecerat, et erant valdè bona (*pulchra-bona*).

LXXVI.

Incredulity takes its rise in excess of vice rather than in excess of ignorance.

LXXVII.

A serpent, intoxicated with pride, was wallowing voluptuously in his bed of mire. Suddenly an eagle darts down upon him and bears him on high. The monster resists, coils himself about the bird, hisses in his face, pierces him with his triple dart.

Yet the eagle soars on, soars ever, with bleeding heart and eye serene, bearing the cold reptile, which struggles, filled with hatred, amid space and light. . . .

This eagle is the Church, the Church bearing to heaven, by doctrine and example, those men of sin who, in recompense, lavish venomous insults upon her, and seek to stifle her in their coils, and lacerate her sides with their stings!

LXXVIII.

What ancient poet was not a priest? What priest of old was not a poet?

Poetry, that language divine descended upon human lips, united heaven and earth as well as

religion. The poet vied with the priest as the interpreter of the divinity. . . .

The infant Church opened its mouth in harmonious wails. A whole swarm of singing bees, a whole chorus of poets surrounded its cradle. There were but few bishops and monks who did not pluck the cords of the harp. Women even were heard to sing in a manner to charm the nightingales, to equal the angels. Then came the Renaissance and the Revolution. The Renaissance raised anew the temples of the gods, the Revolution scattered the churches of God. The infidel, that wolf, saw Mœris, and Mœris lost his voice; "that voice whose science includes everything," and the sanctuary unlearned the art of exultation and of groans. The strict liturgy suffices for worship. No more spontaneous, personal, living poetry. Inspiration holds its peace; tradition could recall itself but vaguely. Poetry quitted the cloister; hymn, drama, winged prose, all flew away like swallows in the autumn. The priest no longer prayed melodiously; the art of verse became a profane art; the shew-bread yielded its place to lay-bread; the minister of God no longer dared to say God, but the gods; people became accustomed to scan Olympus, Tartarus, etc. Santeuil and Vanière found Jupiter more *poetical* than Jehovah-Jesus.

Chateaubriand, Montalembert, Lamartine, Hugo, despatched these cast-off garments to the old-clothes man. Paganism grew musty outside the Church — what am I saying? — outside of the Academy itself, in spite of Leconte de Lisle, and Arsène Houssaye, and Théodore de Banville. André Chénier was afraid of being buried by a priest; he was interred by the executioner. It was a lesson; many understood it. The baseness of the literary revolution was renounced equally with the wildness of the revolutionary literature.

Silence of the neo-pagan poets, whether lay or clerical.

Yes, indeed, but silence also of the pious poets, above all, of the poet-priests! What great poet is a priest to-day? or, if that pleases better, what priest of to-day is a great poet? I speak of France. Spain, which had Calderon, now has Verdaguer, Verdaguer, the magnificent "reviver" of a world engulfed in the billows of the ocean, and in the gloom of history; but as for thee, where is thy poet-priest, O France?

Ah! let him arise at last, and may God grant me to hail him, this mortal doubly crowned! His it is to begin, to pursue and to accomplish the worthy homage and the hymn which is due, in opposition to those violent persons who stand ready to cry, "Oh, scandal!" and to those pusil-

lanimous ones who are prepared to sigh, "Oh, madness! . . ."

LXXIX.

The best, I had almost said the only, way of being virtuous, since the Gospel exists, is to follow the Gospel.

LXXX.

The Holy Scriptures praise the dew of the morning and the dew of the evening; *ros matutinum, ros serotinum!*

Happy is he who possesses the gift of tears! when young, he will bear flowers; when old, fruit!

LXXXI.

The habit of prayer communicates a penetrating sweetness to the glance, the voice, the smile, the tears, to all one says, or does, or writes. . . .

LXXXII.

Ah! what need there is at present that a man should rise up from amongst men; and, prepared for official disgrace, imprudent in the sight of the age, truly wise in the sight of God, should cry, his breast heaving with sobs, that God is too little recognized, conscience too often slain, the interest and honor of each individual too greatly tried. . . .

Friends and enemies would probably repeat, "*Tolle! tolle!*" (away with him! away with him!) But, on the other hand, how faith, hope, and love would be avenged!

LXXXIII.

I. THE GRAIN OF WHEAT. — O sower, why dost thou forsake me? Escaped from the hoar frosts of winter and the storms of summer, how greatly did I suffer when thou didst pluck me from the ripened ear, when thou didst confine me within the depths of the dark granary! Thou lovest me then no longer? Alas! I had hoped to nourish thee one day, that is, to become flesh of thy body, and blood of thy veins. O sower, why dost thou abandon me?

THE SOWER. — I do not abandon thee; I but leave thee for a space. Soon we shall meet again, thou multiplied, I grateful. Fructify. Wait. Complain not. Do thy work. Thou must needs be harvested, and I must harvest thee; I do not abandon thee.

II. THE MAN. — Sower of beings, why have you cast me away upon the earth, naked and alone? Day, night, winter, summer, I suffer. Do you know that I am unhappy after nothingness, before heaven? Why have you cast me away upon the earth, naked and alone, O sower of beings?

GOD. — I have not cast thee away; I have confided thee to the fecundating soil. Grow and prosper. At the time of the harvest I shall gather thee, and thou shalt be served in thy fragrance, upon the table of the father of the family. I have not cast thee away.

LXXXIV.

The man knows only how to say "sorrow"; the Christian, better informed, says "trial."

Trial! that word explains man, evil, Christianity, expiation, heaven, God.

LXXXV.

Repentant sinners hasten to God. His goodness begrudges nothing to his greatness. There is no fear that this great King will ever say to you: "I did wrong to wait."

LXXXVI.

The blue lake sleeps amid the green grass; and the star of heaven, reflected in the wave, forms the counterpart of the glow-worm which gleams upon the shore.

The meditation which envelops nature is so profound that all the sounds of evening can be discerned, — the cry of the cricket, the moan of the frog, the murmur of the breeze, the whispering of the bird which sings no more but is not yet asleep beneath the foliage.

It is night, and the air is transparent; one shivers, and the weather is mild; the earth gives back an echo; space vibrates. . . .

Solitude is peopled; silence speaks.

I gaze upon the firmament; I interrogate the earth; I examine myself also.

What is the great universe? And I, what am I?

I am a colonist of the Lord God here below.

All that I see and hear, near by, afar, beneath my feet, and above my head, has been created by God for me.

And that God, I must love him, know him, serve him. Thus shall I enter into his joy. *Fiat!*

LXXXVII.

O pagan philosophers, your wisdom was a beautiful presentiment. Jews, you knew "the beginning of wisdom, which is the fear of the Lord." Wisdom attains its full growth, bears all its flowers, and yields all its fruits only through Christian love well understood and well practised.

LXXXVIII.

Since neither good nor evil have nowadays much vigor, it seems that God has only wished to give some force to evil, which he hates, in

order to give new energy to the good which he loves.

LXXXIX.

To love to know is human, to know how to love is divine.

XC.

Godescard and his school admire in their *Lives of the Saints* only that which the reason of man could accept of the miracles and prodigies. Everything which exceeded the settled limits was rejected under the name of extravagance, or at least, of temerity. It was with the best faith in the world, and for the greater glory of God, and the good of the faithful, and the honor of the Church, that they said to the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for all, and eager to extend to all, "Thou shalt go no further!"

They were sincere, I repeat, in spite of so much pride and overweening self-confidence; they thought they knew men and things a little better than God himself; they simply gave lessons in tact to the Holy Spirit; they recalled the son of Mary to respect for law, manners, and usages; they explained the Gospel, they made excuse for it when necessary; they clipped the wings of the angels; they warned ecstatics to speak low, and wonder-workers to be

on their guard. The marvels of the Old Testament and of the New sufficed; all the rest was compromising superfluity and lacking in propriety.

Why were not these good people, so mediocre in mind and heart, contemporaries of Jesus Christ? They would have besought him in the name of God, in his own interest and in ours, not to be born in a stable, and, above all, not to die upon a cross!

XCI.

Admirable authority and fortunate popularity of the name of God, which condemns to impotence and devotes to ridicule every legislator who undertakes to omit it, every writer who endeavors to replace it by periphrases!

XCII.

"... *Dilexi nimis.*" (Psalms.) Let us love too much, in order to love as God loves.

XCIII.

No joy is joy without God; no pain is pain with God.

XCIV.

God, for a mass of Christians, is like one of those relatives whom we visit in secret, to whom we are gracious by stealth, but whom we blush

to meet in a public place, or to hear mentioned in a drawing-room.

XCV.

Devotion is not always piety, nor piety always devotion, nor virtue always sanctity.

XCVI.

God is a shower to the heart burned up with grief; God is a sun to the face deluged with tears.

XCVII.

Many persons consider the Latin of the *Imitation* rude and heavy. It should be thought simple, transparent, and picturesque.

The best French translates it but badly, or barely, or not at all. Here are two examples, two proofs of this:—

Book II. chapter ix.: *Magnum est, et valdè magnum, tam humano quam divino posse carere solatio, et pro honore Dei libenter exilium cordis velle sustinere.*[1] . . . Is this *exilium cordis* untranslatable? I do not know, but no interpreter has thoroughly understood it.

Book III. chapter xxiv.: *Non sit tibi curæ*

[1] It is a great thing, a very great thing, to be able to be deprived of every consolation, both human and divine, and to be willing to bear gladly for the love of God, the exile of the heart.

Every great love is tyrannical. The good master commands the good servant, both for his own sake and for the latter's. The friend who, being able, yet would not force you to be happy, would be but a sham friend.

"You must take this remedy!" says the physician to the sick man whom he has resolved to cure. "I will have you eat!" says the father to his son who is no longer hungry and is succumbing to debility. "I insist upon your coming to my house, and sharing my table, my fireside, my bed," says the charitable man to the traveller who dares not venture. . . .

You must, I will, I insist. . . . What is this, if not the *Compelle intrare* of our physician, of our father, of our host Jesus?

C.

Let us not fear giving pain to our brother who has gone astray; let us recall him to duty generously, delicately. Our words will cause in his heart a beneficent trouble, a salutary disquiet, which he will not, perhaps, avow either to himself or to you for the time being, but which he will confess with gratitude after his return.

CI.

The sculptor having thought out a statue, first sketches in the shape of a rough model,

then casts it in bronze, then erects it on a pedestal. . . .

Christian, imitate the sculptor; make for yourself an ideal life, all of terrestrial trial now, all of celestial glory in the future.

CII.

The beggar knocks; and in the shut-up house a voice says, "Go thy way; I will not give!" The beggar approaches another door, and knocks, "Welcome; enter!"

O soul whom the world repulses, be not discouraged; turn to God; He will open to him who knocks, and gives to him who entreats!

CIII.

Bossuet: Always greater than others, at times greater than himself.

CIV.

Let us pray: God is just, he tries us; God is pitiful, he will comfort us; let us pray!

CV.

O Lord Jesus! who wert willing to take our soul and our flesh, in order to suffer like us, with us, for us; who didst endure all anxieties, all bitterness, all injustices, all ingratitude; who didst ask that the cup of the Passion might be taken from thee, and didst cry, "Eloi! eloi! Lamma sabachtani!..." Ah! when the com-

bat of life shall cause me to complain, if men have for me neither pity nor excuse, do you, at least, Lord Jesus, hear me, understand me, comfort me, cheer me! . . .

CVI.

I declare that I retract every passage in this book which would be, directly or distantly, inconsistent with religion and morality. No thought is avowable which is not Catholic. All which did not belong to the Roman Empire bore the name of Barbary; all which is not attached to the Roman Church is named Error. A philosopher, however ingenious he may believe himself to be, or have the reputation of being, propagates darkness, not light, scandal, not peace, if he does not teach like Peter, with Peter. . . .